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STORIES BY AMERICAN AUTHORS.

VOLUME 8

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ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS

Stories by American Authors

VOLUME VIII

THE BRIGADE COMMANDER
BY J. W. DEFOREST

SPLIT ZEPHYR
BY HENRY A. BEERS

ZERVIAH HOPE
BY ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS

THE LIFE-MAGNET
BY ALVEY A. ADEE

OSGOOD'S PREDICAMENT
BY ELIZABETH D. B. STODDARD

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1900

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THE BRIGADE COMMANDER.

By J. W. De Forest.

THE Colonel was the idol of his bragging old regiment and of the bragging brigade which for the last six months he had commanded.

He was the idol, not because he was good and gracious, not because he spared his soldiers or treated them as fellow-citizens, but because he had led them to victory and made them famous. If a man will win battles and give his brigade a right to brag loudly of its doings, he may have its admiration and even its enthusiastic devotion, though he be as pitiless and as wicked as Lucifer.

"It's nothin' to me what the Currnell is in prrivit, so long as he shows us how to whack the rrebs," said Major Gahogan, commandant of the "Old Tenth." "Moses saw God in the burrnin' bussh, an' bowed down to it, an' worrshipt it. It wasn't the bussh he worrshipt; it was his God that was in it. An' I worrship this villin of a

*** *New York Times.*

Currnell (if he is a villin) because he's almighty and gives us the vict'ry. He's nothin' but a human burrnin' bussh, perhaps, but he's got the god of war in um. Adjetant Wallis, it's a —— long time between dhrinks, as I think ye was sayin', an' with rayson. See if ye can't confiscate a canteen of whiskee somewhere in the camp. Bedad, if I can't buy it I'll stale it. We're goin' to fight tomorry, an' it may be it's the last chance we'll have for a dhrink, unless there's more lik'r now in the other worrld than Dives got."

The brigade was bivouacked in some invisible region, amid the damp, misty darkness of a September night. The men lay in their ranks, each with his feet to the front and his head rearward, each covered by his overcoat and pillowed upon his haversack, each with his loaded rifle nestled close beside him. Asleep as they were, or dropping placidly into slumber, they were ready to start in order to their feet and pour out the red light and harsh roar of combat. There were two lines of battle, each of three regiments of infantry, the first some two hundred yards in advance of the second. In the space between them lay two four-gun batteries, one of them brass twelve-pounder "Napoleons," and the other rifled Parrotts. To the rear of the infantry were the recumbent troopers and picketed horses of a regiment of cavalry. All around, in the far, black distance, invisible and inaudible, paced or watched stealthily the sentinels of the grand guards.

There was not a fire, nor a torch, nor a star-beam in the whole bivouac to guide the feet of Adjutant Wallis in his pilgrimage after whisky. The orders from brigade headquarters had been strict against illuminations, for the Confederates were near at hand in force, and a surprise was purposed as well as feared. A tired and sleepy youngster, almost dropping with the heavy somnolence of wearied adolescence, he stumbled on through the trials of an undiscernible and unfamiliar footing, lifting his heavy riding-boots sluggishly over imaginary obstacles, and fearing the while lest his toil were labor misspent. It was a dry camp, he felt dolefully certain, or there would have been more noise in it. He fell over a sleeping Sergeant, and said to him hastily, "Steady, man—a friend!" as the half-roused soldier clutched his rifle. Then he found a Lieutenant, and shook him in vain; further on a Captain, and exchanged saddening murmurs with him; further still a camp-follower of African extraction, and blasphemed him.

"It's a God-forsaken camp, and there isn't a horn in it," said Adjutant Wallis to himself as he pursued his groping journey. "Bet you I don't find the first drop," he continued, for he was a betting boy, and frequently argued by wagers, even with himself. "Bet you two to one I don't. Bet you three to one—ten to one."

Then he saw, an indefinite distance beyond him, burning like red-hot iron through the darkness, a little scarlet or crimson gleam, as of a lighted cigar.

"That's Old Grumps, of the Bloody Fourteenth," he thought. "I've raided into his happy sleeping-grounds. I'll draw on him."

But Old Grumps, otherwise Colonel Lafayette Gildersleeve, had no rations—that is, no whisky.

"How do you suppose an officer is to have a drink, Lieutenant?" he grumbled.

"Don't you know that our would-be Brigadier sent all the commissary to the rear day before yesterday? A canteenful can't last two days. Mine went empty about five minutes ago."

"Oh, thunder!" groaned Wallis, saddened by that saddest of all thoughts, "Too late!" "Well, least said soonest mended. I must wobble back to my Major."

"He'll send you off to some other camp as dry as this one. Wait ten minutes, and he'll be asleep. Lie down on my blanket and light your pipe. I want to talk to you about official business—about our would-be Brigadier."

"Oh, *your* turn will come some day," mumbled Wallis, remembering Gildersleeve's jealousy of the brigade commander—a jealousy which only gave tongue when aroused by "commissary." "If you do as well as usual to-morrow you can have your own brigade."

"I suppose you think we are all going to do well to-morrow," scoffed old Grumps, whose utterance by this time stumbled. "I suppose you expect to whip and to have a good time. I suppose you brag on fighting and enjoy it."

"I like it well enough when it goes right; and it generally does go right with this brigade. I should like it better if the rebs would fire higher and break quicker."

"That depends on the way those are commanded whose business it is to break them," growled Old Grumps. "I don't say but what we are rightly commanded," he added, remembering his duty to superiors. "I concede and acknowledge that our would-be Brigadier knows his military business. But the blessing of God, Wallis! I believe in Waldron as a soldier. But as a man and a Christian, faugh!"

Gildersleeve had clearly emptied his canteen unassisted; he never talked about Christianity when perfectly sober.

"What was your last remark?" inquired Wallis, taking his pipe from his mouth to grin. Even a superior officer might be chaffed a little in the darkness.

"I made no last remark," asserted the Colonel with dignity. "I'm not a-dying yet. If I said anything last it was a mere exclamation of disgust —the disgust of an officer and gentleman. I suppose you know something about our would-be Brigadier. I suppose you think you know something about him."

"Bet you I know *all* about him," affirmed Wallis. "He enlisted in the old Tenth as a common soldier. Before he had been a week in camp they found that he knew his biz, and they made him

a Sergeant. Before we started for the field the Governor got his eye on him and shoved him into a Lieutenancy. The first battle h'isted him to a Captain. And the second—bang! whiz! he shot up to Colonel, right over the heads of everybody, line and field. Nobody in the old Tenth grumbled. They saw that he knew his biz. I know *all* about him. What'll you bet?"

"I'm not a betting man, Lieutenant, except in a friendly game of poker," sighed Old Grumps. "You don't know anything about your Brigadier," he added in a sepulchral murmur, the echo of an empty canteen. "I have only been in this brigade a month, and I know more than you do, far, very far more, sorry to say it. He's a reformed clergyman. He's an apostatized minister." The Colonel's voice as he said this was solemn and sad enough to do credit to an undertaker. "It's a bad sort, Wallis," he continued, after another deep sigh, a very highly perfumed one, the sigh of a bar-keeper. "When a clergyman falls, he falls for life and eternity, like a woman or an angel. I never knew a backslidden shepherd to come to good. Sooner or later he always goes to the devil, and takes down whomsoever hangs to him."

"He'll take down the old Tenth, then," asserted Wallis. "It hangs to him. Bet you two to one he takes it along."

"You're right, Adjutant; spoken like a soldier," swore Gildersleeve. "And the Bloody Fourteenth, too! It will march into the burning pit as far as

any regiment ; and the whole brigade, yes sir ! But a backslidden shepherd, my God ! Have we come to that ? I often say to myself, in the solemn hours of the night, as I remember my Sabbath-school days, ' Great Scott, have we come to that ?' A reformed clergyman ! An apostatized minister ! Think of it, Wallis, think of it ! Why, sir, his very wife ran away from him. They had but just buried their first boy," pursued Old Grumps, his hoarse voice sinking to a whimper. " They drove home from the burial-place, where lay the new-made grave. Arrived at their door, *he* got out and extended his hand to help *her* out. Instead of accepting, instead of throwing herself into his arms and weeping there, she turned to the coachman and said, ' Driver, drive me to my father's house.' That was the end of their wedded life, Wallis."

The Colonel actually wept at this point, and the maudlin tears were not altogether insincere. His own wife and children he heartily loved, and remembered them now with honest tenderness. At home he was not a drinker and a rough ; only amid the hardships and perils of the field.

" That was the end of it, Wallis," he repeated. " And what was it while it lasted ? What does a woman leave her husband for ? Why does she separate from him over the grave of her innocent first-born ? There are twenty reasons, but they must all of them be good ones. I am sorry to give it as my decided opinion, Wallis, in perfect confidence, that they must all be whopping good

ones. Well, that was the beginning; only the beginning. After that he held on for a while, breaking the bread of life to a skedaddling flock, and then he bolted. The next known of him, three years later, he enlisted in your regiment, a smart but seedy recruit, smelling strongly of whisky."

"I wish I smelt half as strong of it myself," grumbled Wallis. "It might keep out the swamp fever."

"That's the true story of Col. John James Waldron," continued Old Grumps, with a groan which was very somnolent, as if it were a twin to a snore. "That's the true story."

"I don't believe the first word of it—that is to say, Colonel, I think you have been misinformed—and I'll bet you two to one on it. If he was nothing more than a minister, how did he know drill and tactics?"

"Oh, I forgot to say, he went through West Point—that is, nearly through. They graduated him in his third year by the back door, Wallis."

"Oh, that was it, was it? He was a West Pointer, was he? Well, then, the backsliding was natural, and oughtn't to count against him. A member of Benny Havens' church has a right to backslide anywhere, especially as the Colonel doesn't seem to be any worse than some of the rest of us, who haven't fallen from grace the least particle, but took our stand at the start just where we are now. A fellow that begins with a handful of trumps has a right to play a risky game."

"I know what euchered him, Wallis. It was the old Little Joker; and there's another of the same on hand now."

"On hand where? What are you driving at, Colonel?"

"He looks like a boy. I mean she looks like a boy. You know what I mean, Wallis; I mean the boy that makes believe wait on him. And her brother is in camp, got here to-night. There'll be an explanation to-morrow, and there'll be bloodshed."

"Good-night, Colonel, and sleep it off," said Wallis, rising from the side of a man whom he believed to be sillily drunk and altogether untrustworthy. "You know we get after the rebs at dawn."

"I know it—goo-night, Adjutant—gawblessyou," mumbled Old Grumps. "We'll lick those rebs, won't we?" he chuckled. "Goo-night, ole fellow, an' gawblessyou."

Whereupon Old Grumps fell asleep, very absurdly overcome by liquor, we extremely regret to concede, but nobly sure to do his soldierly duty as soon as he should awake.

Stumbling wearily blanketward, Wallis found his Major and regimental commander, the genial and gallant Gahogan, slumbering in a peace like that of the just. He stretched himself a-near, put out his hand to touch his sabre and revolver, drew his caped great-coat over him, moved once to free his back of a root or pebble, glanced languidly at

a single struggling star, thought for an instant of his far-away mother, turned his head with a sigh, and slept. In the morning he was to fight, and perhaps to die; but the boyish veteran was too seasoned, and also too tired, to mind that; he could mind but one thing—nature's pleading for rest.

In the iron-gray dawn, while the troops were falling dimly and spectrally into line, and he was mounting his horse to be ready for orders, he remembered Gildersleeve's drunken tale concerning the commandant, and laughed aloud. But turning his face toward brigade headquarters (a sylvan region marked out by the branches of a great oak), he was surprised to see a strange officer, a fair young man in Captain's uniform, riding slowly toward it.

"Is that the Boy's brother?" he said to himself; and in the next instant he had forgotten the whole subject; it was time to form and present the regiment.

Quietly and without tap of drum the small, battleworn battalions filed out of their bivouacs into the highway, ordered arms and waited for the word to march. With a dull rumble the field-pieces trundled slowly after, and halted in rear of the infantry. The cavalry trotted off circuitously through the fields, emerged upon the road in advance and likewise halted, all but a single company, which pushed on for half a mile, spreading out as it went into a thin line of skirmishers.

Meanwhile a strange interview took place near the great oak which had sheltered brigade headquarters. As the unknown officer, whom Wallis had noted, approached it, Col. Waldron was standing by his horse ready to mount. The commandant was a man of medium size, fairly handsome in person and features, and apparently about twenty-eight years of age. Perhaps it was the singular breadth of his forehead which made the lower part of his face look so unusually slight and feminine. His eyes were dark hazel, as clear, brilliant, and tender as a girl's, and brimming full of a pensiveness which seemed both loving and melancholy. Few persons, at all events few women, who looked upon him ever looked beyond his eyes. They were very fascinating, and in a man's countenance very strange. They were the kind of eyes which reveal passionate romances, and which make them.

By his side stood a boy, a singularly interesting and beautiful boy, fair-haired and blue-eyed, and delicate in color. When this boy saw the stranger approach he turned as pale as marble, slid away from the brigade commander's side, and disappeared behind a group of staff officers and orderlies. The new-comer also became deathly white as he glanced after the retreating youth. Then he dismounted, touched his cap slightly and, as if mechanically, advanced a few steps, and said hoarsely, "I believe this is Colonel Waldron. I am Captain Fitz Hugh, of the —th Delaware."

Waldron put his hand to his revolver, withdrew it instantaneously, and stood motionless.

"I am on leave of absence from my regiment, Colonel," continued Fitz Hugh, speaking now with an elaborate ceremoniousness of utterance significant of a struggle to suppress violent emotion. "I suppose you can understand why I made use of it in seeking you."

Waldron hesitated; he stood gazing at the earth with the air of one who represses deep pain; at last, after a profound sigh, he raised his eyes and answered.

"Captain, we are on the eve of a battle. I must attend to my public duties first. After the battle we will settle our private affair."

"There is but one way to settle it, Colonel."

"You shall have your way if you will. You shall do what you will. I only ask what good will it do to *her?*"

"It will do good to *me*, Colonel," whispered Fitz Hugh, suddenly turning crimson. "You forget *me*."

Waldron's face also flushed, and an angry sparkle shot from under his lashes in reply to this utterance of hate, but it died out in an instant.

"I have done a wrong, and I will accept the consequences," he said. "I pledge you my word that I will be at your disposal if I survive the battle. Where do you propose to remain meanwhile?"

"I will take the same chance, Sir. I propose to do my share in the fighting if you will use me."

"I am short of staff officers. Will you act as my aid?"

"I will, Colonel," bowed Fitz Hugh, with a glance which expressed surprise, and perhaps admiration, at this confidence.

Waldron turned, beckoned his staff officers to approach, and said, "Gentlemen, this is Captain Fitz Hugh of the —th Delaware. He has volunteered to join us for the day, and will act as my aid. And now, Captain, will you ride to the head of the column and order it forward? There will be no drum beat and no noise. When you have given your order and seen it executed, you will wait for me."

Fitz Hugh saluted, sprang into his saddle and galloped away. A few minutes later the whole column was plodding on silently toward its bloody goal. To a civilian, unaccustomed to scenes of war, the tranquillity of these men would have seemed very wonderful. Many of the soldiers were still munching the hard bread and raw pork of their meagre breakfasts, or drinking the cold coffee with which they had filled their canteens the day previous. Many more were chatting in an undertone, grumbling over their sore feet and other discomfits, chaffing each other, and laughing. The general bearing, however, was grave, patient, quietly enduring, and one might almost say stolid. You would have said, to judge by their expres-

sions, that these sunburnt fellows were merely doing hard work, and thoroughly commonplace work, without a prospect of adventure, and much less of danger. The explanation of this calmness, so brutal perhaps to the eye of a sensitive soul, lies mainly in the fact that they were all veterans, the survivors of marches, privations, maladies, sieges, and battles. Not a regiment present numbered four hundred men, and the average was not above three hundred. The whole force, including artillery and cavalry, might have been about twenty-five hundred sabres and bayonets.

At the beginning of the march Waldron fell into the rear of his staff and mounted orderlies. Then the Boy who had fled from Fitz Hugh dropped out of the tramping escort, and rode up to his side.

"Well, Charlie," said Waldron, casting a pitying glance at the yet pallid face and anxious eyes of the youth, "you have had a sad fright. I make you very miserable."

"He has found us at last," murmured Charlie in a tremulous soprano voice. "What did he say?"

"We are to talk to-morrow. He acts as my aide-de-camp to-day. I ought to tell you frankly that he is not friendly."

"Of course, I knew it," sighed Charlie, while the tears fell.

"It is only one more trouble—one more danger, and perhaps it may pass. So many *have* passed."

"Did you tell him anything to quiet him? Did you tell him that we were married?"

"But we are not married yet, Charlie. We shall be, I hope."

"But you ought to have told him that we were. It might stop him from doing something—mad. Why didn't you tell him so? Why didn't you think of it?"

"My dear little child, we are about to have a battle. I should like to carry some honor and truth into it."

"Where is he?" continued Charlie, unconvinced and unappeased. "I want to see him. Is he at the head of the column? I want to speak to him, just one word. He won't hurt me."

She suddenly spurred her horse, wheeled into the fields, and dashed onward. Fitz Hugh was lounging in his saddle, and sombrely surveying the passing column, when she galloped up to him.

"Carrol!" she said, in a choked voice, reining in by his side, and leaning forward to touch his sleeve.

He threw one glance at her—a glance of aversion, if not of downright hatred, and turned his back in silence.

"He is my husband, Carrol," she went on rapidly. "I knew you didn't understand it. I ought to have written you about it. I thought I would come and tell you before you did anything absurd. We were married as soon as he heard that his wife was dead."

"What is the use of this?" he muttered

hoarsely. "She is not dead. I heard from her a week ago. She was living a week ago."

"Oh, Carrol!" stammered Charlie. "It was some mistake then. Is it possible! And he was so sure! But he can get a divorce, you know. She abandoned him. Or *she* can get one. No, *he* can get it—of course, when she abandoned him. But, Carrol, she *must* be dead—he was *so* sure."

"She is *not* dead, I tell you. And there can be no divorce. Insanity bars all claim to a divorce. She is in an asylum. She had to leave him, and then she went mad."

"Oh, no, Carrol, it is all a mistake; it is not so, Carrol," she murmured in a voice so faint that he could not help glancing at her, half in fury and half in pity. She was slowly falling from her horse. He sprang from his saddle, caught her in his arms, and laid her on the turf, wishing the while that it covered her grave. Just then one of Waldron's orderlies rode up and exclaimed: "What is the matter with the—the Boy? Hullo, Charlie."

Fitz Hugh stared at the man in silence, tempted to tear him from his horse. "The boy is ill," he answered when he recovered his self-command. "Take charge of him yourself." He remounted, rode onward out of sight beyond a thicket, and there waited for the brigade commander, now and then fingering his revolver. As Charlie was being placed in an ambulance by the orderly and a sergeant's wife, Waldron came up, reined in his horse

violently, and asked in a furious voice, "Is that boy hurt?"

"Ah—fainted," he added immediately. "Thank you, Mrs. Gunner. Take good care of him—the best of care, my dear woman, and don't let him leave you all day."

Further on, when Fitz Hugh silently fell into his escort, he merely glanced at him in a furtive way, and then cantered on rapidly to the head of the cavalry. There he beckoned to the tall, grave, iron-gray Chaplain of the Tenth, and rode with him for nearly an hour, apart, engaged in low and seemingly impassioned discourse. From this interview Mr. Colquhoun returned to the escort with a strangely solemnized, tender countenance, while the commandant, with a more cheerful air than he had yet worn that day, gave himself to his martial duties, inspecting the landscape incessantly with his glass, and sending frequently for news to the advance scouts. It may properly be stated here that the Chaplain never divulged to any one the nature of the conversation which he had held with his Colonel.

Nothing further of note occurred until the little army, after two hours of plodding march, wound through a sinuous, wooded ravine, entered a broad, bare, slightly undulating valley, and for the second time halted. Waldron galloped to the summit of a knoll, pointed to a long eminence which faced him some two miles distant, and said tranquilly, "There is our battle-ground."

"Is that the enemy's position?" returned Captain Ives, his Adjutant-General. "We shall have a tough job if we go at it from here."

Waldron remained in deep thought for some minutes, meanwhile scanning the ridge and all its surroundings.

"What I want to know," he observed, at last, "is whether they have occupied the wooded knolls in front of their right and around their right flank."

Shortly afterward the commander of the scouting squadron came riding back at a furious pace.

"They are on the hill, Colonel," he shouted.

"Yes, of course," nodded Waldron; "but have they occupied the woods which veil their right front and flank?"

"Not a bit of it; my fellows have cantered all through, and up to the base of the hill."

"Ah!" exclaimed the brigade commander, with a rush of elation. "Then it will be easy work. Go back, Captain, and scatter your men through the wood, and hold it, if possible. Adjutant, call up the regimental commanders at once. I want them to understand my plan fully."

In a few minutes Gahogan, of the Tenth; Gildersleeve, of the Fourteenth; Peck, of the First; Thomas, of the Seventh; Taylor, of the Eighth, and Colburn, of the Fifth, were gathered around their commander. There, too, was Bradley, the boyish, red cheeked chief of the artillery; and Stilton, the rough, old, bearded regular, who headed the cavalry. The staff was at hand, also,

including Fitz Hugh, who sat his horse a little apart, downcast and sombre and silent, but nevertheless keenly interested. It is worthy of remark, by the way, that Waldron took no special note of him, and did not seem conscious of any disturbing presence. Evil as the man may have been, he was a thoroughly good soldier, and just now he thought but of his duties.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I want you to see your field of battle. The enemy occupy that long ridge. How shall we reach it?"

"I think, if we go at it straight from here, we shan't miss it," promptly judged Old Grumps, his red-oak countenance admirably cheerful and hopeful, and his jealousy all dissolved in the interest of approaching combat.

"Nor they won't miss us nuther," laughed Major Gahogan. "Betther slide our infantree into thim wuds, push up our skirmishers, play away wid our guns for an hour, an' thin rowl in a couple o' col'ms."

There was a general murmur of approval. The limits of volunteer invention in tactics had been reached by Gahogan. The other regimental commanders looked upon him as their superior in the art of war.

"That would be well, Major, if we could do nothing better," said Waldron. "But I do not feel obliged to attack the front seriously at all. The rebels have been thoughtless enough to leave that long semicircle of wooded knolls unoccupied,

even by scouts. It stretches from the front of their centre clear around their right flank. I shall use it as a veil to cover us while we get into position. I shall throw out a regiment, a battery, and five companies of cavalry, to make a feint against their centre and left. With the remainder of the brigade I shall skirt the woods, double around the right of the position, and close in upon it front and rear."

"Loike scissors blades upon a snip o' paper," shouted Gahogan, in delight. Then he turned to Fitz Hugh, who happened to be nearest him, and added, "I tell ye he's got the God o' War in um. He's the burrnin' bussh of humanity, wid a God o' Battles inside on't."

"But how if they come down on our thin right wing?" asked a cautious officer, Taylor, of the Eighth. They might smash it and seize our line of retreat."

"Men who have taken up a strong position, a position obviously chosen for defense, rarely quit it promptly for an attack," replied Waldron. "There is not one chance in ten that these gentlemen will make a considerable forward movement early in the fight. Only the greatest geniuses jump from the defensive to the offensive. Besides, we must hold the wood. So long as we hold the wood in front of their centre we save the road."

Then came personal and detailed instructions. Each regimental commander was told whither he should march, the point where he should halt to

form line, and the direction by which he should attack. The mass of the command was to advance in marching column toward a knoll where the highway entered and traversed the wood. Some time before reaching it Taylor was to deploy the Eighth to the right, throw out a strong skirmish line and open fire on the enemy's centre and left, supported by the battery of Parrotts, and, if pushed, by five companies of cavalry. The remaining troops would reach the knoll, file to the left under cover of the forest, skirt it for a mile as rapidly as possible, enfold the right of the Confederate position, and then move upon it concentrically. Counting from the left, the Tenth, the Seventh, and the Fourteenth were to constitute the first line of battle, while five companies of cavalry, then the First, and then the Fifth formed the second line. Not until Gahogan might have time to wind into the enemy's right rear should Gildersleeve move out of the wood and commence the real attack.

"You will go straight at the front of their right," said Waldron, with a gay smile, to this latter Colonel. "Send up two companies as skirmishers. The moment they are clearly checked, lead up the other eight in line. It will be rough work. But keep pushing. You won't have fifteen minutes of it before Thomas, on your left, will be climbing the end of the ridge to take the rebels in flank. In fifteen minutes more Gahogan will be running in on their backs. Of course they will try

to change front and meet us. But they have extended their line a long way in order to cover the whole ridge. They will not be quick enough. We shall get hold of their right, and we shall roll them up. Then, Colonel Stilton, I shall expect to see the troopers jumping into the gaps and making prisoners."

"All right, Colonel," answered Stilton in that hoarse growl which is apt to mark the old cavalry officer. "Where shall we find you if we want a fresh order?"

"I shall be with Colburn, in rear of Gildersleeve. That is our centre. But never mind me; you know what the battle is to be, and you know how to fight it. The whole point with the infantry is to fold around the enemy's right, go in upon it concentrically, smash it, and roll up their line. The cavalry will watch against the infantry being flanked, and when the latter have seized the hill, will charge for prisoners. The artillery will reply to the enemy's guns with shell, and fire grape at any offensive demonstration. You all know your duties, now, gentlemen. Go to your commands, and march!"

The Colonels saluted and started off at a gallop. In a few minutes twenty-five hundred men were in simultaneous movement. Five companies of cavalry wheeled into column of companies, and advanced at a trot through the fields, seeking to gain the shelter of the forest. The six infantry regiments slid up alongside of each other, and

pushed on in six parallel columns of march, two on the right of the road and four on the left. The artillery, which alone left the highway, followed at a distance of two or three hundred yards. The remaining cavalry made a wide detour to the right, as if to flank the enemy's left.

It was a mile and a quarter—it was a march of fully twenty minutes—to the edge of the woodland, the proposed cover of the column. Ten minutes before this point was reached a tiny puff of smoke showed on the brow of the hostile ridge ; then, at an interval of several seconds, followed the sound of a distant explosion ; then, almost immediately, came the screech of a rifled shell. Every man who heard it swiftly asked himself, "Will it strike *me?*" But even as the words were thought out it had passed, high in air, clean to the rear, and burst harmlessly. A few faces turned upward and a few eyes glanced backward, as if to see the invisible enemy. But there was no pause in the column ; it flowed onward quietly, eagerly, and with business-like precision ; it gave forth no sound but the trampling of feet and the muttering of the officers, "Steady, men ! Forward, men."

The Confederates, however, had got their range. A half minute later four puffs of smoke dotted the ridge, and a flight of hoarse humming shrieks tore the air. A little aureole cracked and splintered over the First, followed by loud cries of anguish and a brief, slight confusion. The voice of an officer rose sharply out of the flurry, "Close up, Com-

pany A! Forward, men!" The battalion column resumed its even formation in an instant, and tramped unitedly onward, leaving behind it two quivering corpses and a wounded man who tottered rearward.

Then came more screeches, and a shell exploded over the high road, knocking a gunner lifeless from his carriage. The brigade commander glanced anxiously along his batteries, and addressed a few words to his chief of artillery. Presently the four Napoleons set forward at a gallop for the wood, while the four Parrotts wheeled to the right deployed, and advanced across the fields, inclining toward the left of the enemy. Next, Taylor's regiment (the Eighth) halted, fronted, faced to the right, and filed off in column of march at a double quick until it had gained the rear of the Parrotts, when it fronted again, and pushed on in support. A quarter of a mile further on these guns went into battery behind the brow of a little knoll, and opened fire. Four companies of the English spread out to the right as skirmishers, and commenced stealing toward the ridge, from time to time measuring the distance with rifle-balls. The remainder of the regiment lay down in line between the Parrotts and the forest. Far away to the right, five companies of cavalry showed themselves, maneuvering as if they proposed to turn the left flank of the Southerners. The attack on this side was in form and in operation.

Meantime the Confederate fire had divided.

Two guns pounded away at Taylor's feint, while two shelled the main column. The latter was struck repeatedly ; more than twenty men dropped silent or groaning out of the hurrying files ; but the survivors pushed on without faltering, and without even caring for the wounded. At last a broad belt of green branches rose between the regiments and the ridge ; and the rebel gunners, unable to see their foe, dropped suddenly into silence.

Here it appeared that the road divided. The highway traversed the forest, mounted the slope beyond and dissected the enemy's position, while a branch road turned to the left and skirted the exterior of the long curve of wooded hillocks. At the fork the battery of Napoleons had halted, and there it was ordered to remain for the present in quiet. There, too, the Fourteenth filed in among the dense greenery, threw out two companies of skirmishers toward the ridge, and pushed slowly after them into the shadows.

"Get sight of the enemy at once!" was Waldron's last word to Gildersleeve. "If they move down the slope, drive them back. But don't commence your attack under half an hour."

Next he filed the Fifth into the thickets, saying to Colburn, "I want you to halt a hundred yards to the left and rear of Gildersleeve. Cover his flank if he is attacked ; but otherwise lie quiet. As soon as he charges, move forward to the edge of the wood, and be ready to support him. But make no assault yourself until further orders."

The two next regiments—the Seventh and First—he placed in *échelon*, in like manner, a quarter of a mile further along. Then he galloped forward to the cavalry, and had a last word with Stilton. "You and Gahogan must take care of yourselves. Push on four or five hundred yards, and then face to the right. Whatever Gahogan finds let him go at it. If he can't shake it, help him. You two *must* reach the top of the ridge. Only, look out for your left flank. Keep a squadron or two in reserve on that side."

"Currnel, if we don't raich the top of the hill, it'll be because it hasn't got wan," answered Gahogan. Stilton only laughed and rode forward.

Waldron now returned toward the fork of the road. On the way he sent a staff officer to the Seventh with renewed orders to attack as soon as possible after Gildersleeve. Then another staff officer was hurried forward to Taylor with directions to push his feint strongly, and drive his skirmishers as far up the slope as they could get. A third staff officer set the Parrotts in rear of Taylor to firing with all their might. By the time that the commandant had returned to Colburn's ambushed ranks, no one was with him but his enemy, Fitz Hugh.

"You don't seem to trust me with duty, Colonel," said the young man.

"I shall use you only in case of extremity, Captain," replied Waldron. "We have business to settle to-morrow."

"I ask no favors on that account. I hope you will offer me none."

"In case of need I shall spare no one," declared Waldron.

Then he took out his watch, looked at it impatiently, put it to his ear, restored it to his pocket, and fell into an attitude of deep attention. Evidently his whole mind was on his battle, and he was waiting, watching, yearning for its outburst.

"If he wins this fight," thought Fitz Hugh, "how can I do him a harm? And yet," he added, "how can I help it?"

Minutes passed. Fitz Hugh tried to think of his injury, and to steel himself against his chief. But the roar of battle on the right, and the suspense and imminence of battle on the left, absorbed the attention of even this wounded and angry spirit, as, indeed, they might have absorbed that of any being not more or less than human. A private wrong, insupportable though it might be, seemed so small amid that deadly clamor and awful expectation! Moreover, the intellect which worked so calmly and vigorously by his side, and which alone of all things near appeared able to rule the coming crisis, began to dominate him, in spite of his sense of injury. A thought crossed him to the effect that the great among men are too valuable to be punished for their evil deeds. He turned to the absorbed brigade commander, now not only his ruler but even his protector, with a feeling that he must accord him a word of peace, a proffer in

some form of possible forgiveness and friendship. But the man's face was clouded and stern with responsibility and authority. He seemed at that moment too lofty to be approached with a message of pardon. Fitz Hugh gazed at him with a mixture of profound respect and smothered hate. He gazed, turned away, and remained silent.

Minutes more passed. Then a mounted orderly dashed up at full speed, with the words, "Colonel Major Gahogan has fronted."

"Has he?" answered Waldron, with a smile which thanked the trooper and made him happy. "Ride on through the thicket here, my man, and tell Colonel Gildersleeve to push up his skirmishers."

With a thud of hoofs and a rustling of parting foliage the cavalryman disappeared amid the underwood. A minute or two later a thin, dropping rattle of musketry, five hundred yards or so to the front, announced that the sharpshooters of the Fourteenth were at work. Almost immediately there was an angry response, full of the threatenings and execution of death. Through the lofty leafage tore the screech of a shell, bursting with a sharp crash as it passed overhead, and scattering in humming slivers. Then came another, and another, and many more, chasing each other with hoarse hissings through the trembling air, a succession of flying serpents. The enemy doubtless believed that nearly the whole attacking force was massed in the wood around the road, and they had

brought at least four guns to bear upon that point, and were working them with the utmost possible rapidity. Presently a large chestnut, not fifty yards from Fitz Hugh, was struck by a shot. The solid trunk, nearly three feet in diameter, parted asunder as if it were the brittlest of vegetable matter. The upper portion started aside with a monstrous groan, dropped in a standing posture to the earth, and then toppled slowly, sublimely prostrate, its branches crashing and all its leaves wailing. Ere long, a little further to the front, another Anak of the forest went down ; and, mingled with the noise of its sylvan agony, there arose sharp cries of human suffering. Then Colonel Colburn, a broad-chested and ruddy man of thirty-five, with a look of indignant anxiety in his iron-gray eyes, rode up to the brigade commander.

"This is very annoying, Colonel," he said. "I am losing my men without using them. That last tree fell into my command."

"Are they firing toward our left?" asked Waldron.

"Not a shot."

"Very good," said the chief, with a sigh of contentment. "If we can only keep them occupied in this direction! By the way, let your men lie down under the fallen tree, as far as it will go. It will protect them from others."

Colburn rode back to his regiment. Waldron looked impatiently at his watch. At that moment

a fierce burst of line firing arose in front, followed and almost overborne by a long-drawn yell, the scream of charging men. Waldron put up his watch, glanced excitedly at Fitz Hugh, and smiled.

"I must forgive or forget," the latter could not help saying to himself. "All the rest of life is nothing compared with this."

"Captain," said Waldron, "ride off to the left at full speed. As soon as you hear firing at the shoulder of the ridge, return instantly and let me know."

Fitz Hugh dashed away. Three minutes carried him into perfect peace, beyond the whistling of ball or the screeching of shell. On the right was a tranquil, wide waving of foliage, and on the left a serene landscape of cultivated fields, with here and there an embowered farm house. Only for the clamor of artillery and musketry far behind him, he could not have believed in the near presence of battle, of blood and suffering and triumphant death. But suddenly he heard to his right, assaulting and slaughtering the tranquillity of nature, a tumultuous outbreak of file-firing, mingled with savage yells. He wheeled, drove spurs into his horse, and flew back to Waldron. As he re-entered the wood he met wounded men streaming through it, a few marching alertly upright, many more crouching and groaning, some clinging to their less injured comrades, but all haggard in face and ghastly.

"Are we winning?" he hastily asked of one man who held up a hand with three fingers gone and the bones projecting in sharp spikes through mangled flesh.

"All right, Sir; sailing in," was the answer.

"Is the brigade commander all right?" he inquired of another who was winding a bloody handkerchief around his arm.

"Straight ahead, Sir; hurrah for Waldron!" responded the soldier, and almost in the same instant fell lifeless with a fresh ball through his head.

"Hurrah for him!" Fitz Hugh answered frantically, plunging on through the underwood. He found Waldron with Colburn, the two conversing tranquilly in their saddles amid hissing bullets and dropping branches.

"Move your regiment forward now," the brigade commander was saying; "but halt it in the edge of the wood."

"Shan't I relieve Gildersleeve if he gets beaten?" asked the subordinate officer eagerly.

"No. The regiments on the left will help him out. I want your men and Peck's for the fight on top of the hill. Of course the rebels will try to retake it; then I shall call for you."

Fitz Hugh now approached and said, "Colonel, the Seventh has attacked in force."

"Good!" answered Waldron, with that sweet smile of his which thanked people who brought him pleasant news. "I thought I heard his fire.

Gahogan will be on their right rear in ten minutes. Then we shall get the ridge. Ride back now to Major Bradley, and tell him to bring his Napoleons through the wood, and set two of them to shelling the enemy's centre. Tell him my idea is to amuse them, and keep them from changing front."

Again Fitz Hugh galloped off as before on a comfortably safe errand, safer at all events than many errands of that day. "This man is sparing my life," he said to himself. "Would to God I knew how to spare his!"

He found Bradley lunching on a gun caisson, and delivered his orders. "Something to do at last, eh?" laughed the rosy-cheeked youngster. "The smallest favors thankfully received. Won't you take a bite of rebel chicken, Captain? This rebellion must be put down. No? Well, tell the Colonel I am moving on, and John Brown's soul not far ahead."

When Fitz Hugh returned to Waldron he found him outside of the wood, at the base of the long incline which rose into the rebel position. About the slope were scattered prostrate forms, most numerous near the bottom, some crawling slowly rearward, some quiescent. Under the brow of the ridge, decimated and broken into a mere skirmish line sheltered in knots and singly, behind rocks and knolls and bushes, lay the Fourteenth Regiment, keeping up a steady, slow fire. From the edge above, smokily dim against a pure, blue

heaven, answered another rattle of musketry, incessant, obstinate, and spiteful. The combatants on both sides were lying down ; otherwise neither party could have lasted ten minutes. From Fitz Hugh's point of view not a Confederate uniform could be seen. But the smoke of their rifles made a long gray line, which was disagreeably visible and permanent ; and the sharp *whit ! whit !* of their bullets continually passed him, and cheeped away in the leafage behind.

" Our men can't get on another inch," he ventured to say to his commander. " Wouldn't it be well for me to ride up and say a cheering word ?"

" Every battle consists largely in waiting," replied Waldron thoughtfully. " They have undoubtedly brought up a reserve to face Thomas. But when Gahogan strikes the flank of the reserve, we shall win."

" I wish you would take shelter," begged Fitz Hugh. " Everything depends on your life."

" My life has been both a help and a hurt to my fellow-creatures," sighed the brigade commander. " Let come what will to it."

He glanced upward with an expression of profound emotion ; he was evidently fighting two battles, an outward and an inward one.

Presently he added, " I think the musketry is increasing on the left. Does it strike you so ?"

He was all eagerness again, leaning forward with an air of earnest listening, his face deeply flushed and his eye brilliant. Of a sudden the combat

above rose and swelled into higher violence. There was a clamor far away—it seemed nearly a mile away—over the hill. Then the nearer musketry, first Thomas' on the shoulder of the ridge, next Gildersleeve's in front, caught fire and raged with new fury.

Waldron laughed outright. "Gahogan has reached them," he said to one of his staff who had just rejoined him. "We shall all be up there in five minutes. Tell Colburn to bring on his regiment slowly."

Then, turning to Fitz Hugh, he added, "Captain, we will ride forward."

They set off at a walk, now watching the smoking brow of the eminence, now picking their way among dead and wounded. Suddenly there was a shout above them and a sudden diminution of the firing; and looking upward, they saw the men of the Fourteenth running confusedly toward the summit. Without a word the brigade commander struck spurs into his horse and dashed up the long slope at a run, closely followed by his enemy and aid. What they saw when they overtook the straggling, running, panting, screaming pell-mell of the Fourteenth was victory!

The entire right wing of the Confederates, attacked on three sides at once, placed at enormous disadvantage, completely outgeneraled, had given way in confusion, was retreating, breaking, and flying. There were lines yet of dirty gray or butternut; but they were few, meagre, fluctuat-

ing, and recoiling, and there were scattered and scurrying men in hundreds. Three veteran and gallant regiments had gone all to wreck under the shock of three similar regiments far more intelligently directed. A strong position had been lost because the heroes who held it could not perform the impossible feat of forming successively two fresh fronts under a concentric fire of musketry. The inferior brain power had confessed the superiority of the stronger one.

On the victorious side there was wild, clamorous, fierce exultation. The hurrying, shouting, firing soldiers, who noted their commander riding among them, swung their rifles or their tattered hats at him, and screamed "Hurrah!" No one thought of the Confederate dead under foot, nor of the Union dead who dotted the slope behind. "What are you here for, Colonel?" shouted rough old Gildersleeve, one leg of his trousers dripping blood. "We can do it alone."

"It is a battle won," laughed Fitz Hugh, almost worshipping the man whom he had come to slay.

"It is a battle won, but not used," answered Waldron. "We haven't a gun yet, nor a flag. Where is the cavalry? Why isn't Stilton here? He must have got afoul of the enemy's horse, and been obliged to beat it off. Can anybody hear anything of Stilton?"

"Let him go," roared old Grumps. "The infantry don't want any help."

"Your regiment has suffered, Colonel," answered Waldron, glancing at the scattered files of the Fourteenth. "Halt it and reorganize it, and let it fall in with the right of the First when Peck comes up. I shall replace you with the Fifth. Send your Adjutant back to Colburn and tell him to hurry along. Those fellows are making a new front over there," he added, pointing to the centre of the hill. "I want the Fifth, Seventh, and Tenth in *échelon* as quickly as possible. And I want that cavalry. Lieutenant," turning to one of his staff, "ride off to the left and find Colonel Stilton. Tell him that I need a charge in ten minutes."

Presently cannon opened from that part of the ridge still held by the Confederates, the shells tearing through or over the dissolving groups of their right wing, and cracking viciously above the heads of the victorious Unionists. The explosions followed each other with stunning rapidity, and the shrill whirring of the splinters was ominous. Men began to fall again in the ranks or to drop out of them wounded. Of all this Waldron took no further note than to ride hastily to the brow of the ridge and look for his own artillery.

"See how he attinds to iverything himself," said Major Gahogan, who had cantered up to the side of Fitz Hugh. "It's just a matther of plain business, an' he looks after it loike a business man. Did ye see us, though, Captin, whin we come in on their right flank? By George, we murthered um.

There's more'n a hundred lyin' in hapes back there. As for old Stilton, I just caught sight of um behind that wood to our left, an' he's makin' for the enemy's right rair. He'll have lots o' prisoners in half an hour."

When Waldron returned to the group he was told of his cavalry's whereabouts, and responded to the information with a smile of satisfaction.

"Bradley is hurrying up," he said, "and Taylor is pushing their left smartly. They will make one more tussle to recover their line of retreat; but we shall smash them from end to end and take every gun."

He galloped now to his infantry, and gave the word "Forward!" The three regiments which composed the *échelon* were the Fifth on the right, the Seventh fifty yards to the rear and left of the Fifth, the Tenth to the rear and left of the Seventh. It was behind the Fifth, that is the foremost battalion, that the brigade commander posted himself.

"Do *you* mean to stay here, Colonel?" asked Fitz Hugh, in surprise and anxiety.

"It is a certain victory now," answered Waldron, with a singular glance upward. "My life is no longer important. I prefer to do my duty to the utmost in the sight of all men."

"I shall follow you and do mine, Sir," said the Captain, much moved, he could scarcely say by what emotions, they were so many and conflicting.

"I want you other wheres. Ride to Colonel

Taylor at once, and hurry him up the hill. Tell him the enemy have greatly weakened their left. Tell him to push up everything, infantry, and cavalry, and artillery, and to do it in haste."

"Colonel, this is saving my life against my will," remonstrated Fitz Hugh.

"Go!" ordered Waldron, imperiously. "Time is precious."

Fitz Hugh dashed down the slope to the right at a gallop. The brigade commander turned tranquilly, and followed the march of his *division*. The second and decisive crisis of the little battle was approaching, and to understand it we must glance at the ground on which it was to be fought. Two hostile lines were marching toward each other along the broad, gently rounded crest of the hill and at right angles to its general course. Between these lines, but much the nearest to the Union troops, a spacious road came up out of the forest in front, crossed the ridge, swept down the smooth decline in rear, and led to a single wooden bridge over a narrow but deep rivulet. On either hand the road was hedged in by a close board fence, four feet or so in height. It was for the possession of this highway that the approaching lines were about to shed their blood. If the Confederates failed to win it, all their artillery would be lost, and their army captured or dispersed.

The two parties came on without firing. The soldiers on both sides were veterans, cool, obedient to orders, intelligent through long service, and

able to reserve all their resources for a short-range and final struggle. Moreover, the fences as yet partially hid them from each other, and would have rendered all aim for the present vague and uncertain.

"Forward, Fifth!" shouted Waldron. "Steady. Reserve your fire." Then, as the regiment came up to the fence, he added, "Halt; right dress. Steady, men."

Meantime he watched the advancing array with an eager gaze. It was a noble sight, full of moral sublimity, and worthy of all admiration. The long, lean, sunburned, weather-beaten soldiers in ragged gray stepped forward, superbly, their ranks loose, but swift and firm, the men leaning forward in their haste, their tattered slouch hats pushed backward, their whole aspect business-like and virile. Their line was three battalions strong, far outflanking the Fifth, and at least equal to the entire *échelon*. When within thirty or forty yards of the further fence they increased their pace to nearly a double-quick, many of them stooping low in hunter fashion, and a few firing. Then Waldron rose in his stirrups and yelled, "Battalion! ready —aim—aim low. Fire!"

There was a stunning roar of three hundred and fifty rifles, and a deadly screech of bullets. But the smoke rolled out, the haste to reload was intense, and none could mark what execution was done. Whatever the Confederates may have suffered, they bore up under the volley, and they came

on. In another minute each of those fences, not more than twenty-five yards apart, was lined by the shattered fragment of a regiment, each firing as fast as possible into the face of the other. The Fifth bled fearfully : it had five of its ten company commanders shot dead in three minutes ; and its loss in other officers and in men fell scarcely short of this terrible ratio. On its left the Seventh and the Tenth were up, pouring in musketry, and receiving it in a fashion hardly less sanguinary. No one present had ever seen, or ever afterward saw, such another close and deadly contest.

But the strangest thing in this whole wonderful fight was the conduct of the brigade commander. Up and down the rear of the lacerated Fifth Waldron rode thrice, spurring his plunging and wounded horse close to the yelling and fighting file-closers, and shouting in a piercing voice encouragement to his men. Stranger still, considering the character which he had borne in the army, and considering the evil deed for which he was to account on the morrow, were the words which he was distinctly and repeatedly heard to utter. "Stand steady, men—God is with us!" was the extraordinary battle-cry of this backslidden clergyman, this sinner above many.

And it was a prophecy of victory. Bradley ran up his Napoleons on the right in the nick of time, and, although only one of them could be brought to bear, it was enough ; the grape raked the Confederate left, broke it, and the battle was over. In

five minutes more their whole array was scattered, and the entire position open to galloping cavalry, seizing guns, standards, and prisoners.

It was in the very moment of triumph, just as the stubborn Southern line reeled back from the fence in isolated clusters, that the miraculous impunity of Waldron terminated, and he received his death wound. A quarter of an hour later Fitz Hugh found a sorrowful group of officers gazing from a little distance upon their dying commander.

"Is the Colonel hit?" he asked, shocked and grieved, incredible as the emotion may seem.

"Don't go near him," called Gildersleeve, who, it will be remembered, knew or guessed his errand in camp. "The Chaplain and surgeon are there. Let him alone."

"He's going to render his account," added Gahogan. "An' whativer he's done wrong, he's made it square to-day. Let um lave it to his brigade."

Adjutant Wallis, who had been blubbering aloud, who had cursed the rebels and the luck energetically, and who had also been trying to pray inwardly, groaned out, "This is our last victory. You see if it ain't. Bet you two to one."

"Hush, man!" replied Gahogan. "We'll win our share of um, though we'll have to work harder for it. We'll have to do more ourselves, an' get less done for us in the way of tactics."

"That so, Major," whimpered a drummer, looking up from his duty of attending to a wounded

comrade. "He knowed how to put his men in the right place, and his men knowed when they was in the right place. But it's goin' to be uphill through the steepest part of hell the rest of the way."

Soldiers, some of them weeping, some of them bleeding, arrived constantly to inquire after their commander, only to be sent quietly back to their ranks or to the rear. Around lay other men—dead men, and senseless, groaning men—all for the present unnoticed. Everything, except the distant pursuit of the cavalry, waited for Waldron to die. Fitz Hugh looked on silently, with the tears of mingled emotions in his eyes, and with hopes and hatreds expiring in his heart. The surgeon supported the expiring victor's head, while Chaplain Colquhoun knelt beside him, holding his hand and praying audibly. Of a sudden the petition ceased, both bent hastily toward the wounded man, and after what seemed a long time exchanged whispers. Then the Chaplain rose, came slowly toward the now advancing group of officers, his hands outspread toward heaven in an attitude of benediction, and tears running down his haggard white face.

"I trust, dear friends," he said, in a tremulous voice, "that all is well with our brother and commander. His last words were, 'God is with us.'"

"Oh! but, man, *that* isn't well," broke out Gahogan, in a groan. "What did ye pray for his sowl for? Why didn't ye pray for his loife?"

Fitz Hugh turned his horse and rode silently away. The next day he was seen journeying rearward by the side of an ambulance, within which lay what seemed a strangely delicate boy, insensible, and, one would say, mortally ill.

SPLIT ZEPHYR.

AN ATTENUATED YARN SPUN BY THE FATES.

By Henry A. Beers.

IT was the evening of Commencement Day. The old church on the green, which had rung for many consecutive hours with the eloquence of slim young gentlemen in evening dress, exhorting the Scholar in Politics or denouncing the Gross Materialism of the Age, was at last empty and still. As it drew the dewy shadows softly about its eaves and filled its rasped interior with soothing darkness, it bore a whimsical likeness to some aged horse which, having been pestered all day with flies, was now feeding in peace along the dim pasture.

It was Clay who suggested this resemblance, and we all laughed appreciatively, as we used to do in those days at Clay's clever sayings. There were

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five of us strolling down the diagonal walk to our farewell supper at "Ambrose's." Arrived at that refectory, we found it bare of guests and had things quite to ourselves. After supper, we took our coffee out in the little court-yard, where a fountain dribbled, and the flutter of the grape-leaves on the trellises in the night wind invited to confidences.

"Well, Armstrong," began Doddridge, "where are you going to spend the vacation?"

"Vacation!" answered Armstrong; "vacations are over for me."

"You're not going to work for your living at once?" inquired Berkeley.

"I'm going to work to-morrow," replied Armstrong, emphatically: "I'm going down to New York to enter a law office."

"I thought you had some notion of staying here and taking a course of graduate study."

"No, sir! The sooner a man gets into harness, the better. I've wasted enough time in the last four years. The longer a man loafs around in this old place, under pretense of reading and that kind of thing, the harder it is for him to take hold."

Armstrong was a rosy little man, with yellow hair and light eyes. His expression was one of irresolute good nature. His temper was sanguine and expansive, and he had been noted in college for anything but concentration of pursuit. He was gregarious in his habits, susceptible and subject to sudden enthusiasms. His good nature

made him a victim to all the bores and idlers in the class, and his room became a favorite resort for men on their way to recitation, being on the ground floor and near the lecture-rooms. They would drop in about half an hour before the bell rang, and make up a little game of "penny ante" around Armstrong's center-table. In these diversions he seldom took part, as he had given it out publicly that he was "studying for a stand"; but his abstinence from the game in no wise damped the spirits of his guests. Occasionally his presence would receive the notice of the company somewhat as follows:

No. 1. "Make less noise, fellows: Charley is digging out that Puckle lesson."

No. 2. "You go into the bedroom, Charley, and shut the door, and then you won't be bothered by the racket."

No. 3. "Oh, hang the Puckle! Come and take a hand, Charley. We'll let you in this pool without an ante."

No. 4. "Why don't you get a new pack of cards, Charley? It's a disgrace to you to keep such a dirty lot of old pasteboards for your friends."

In face of which abuse, Armstrong was as helpless as Telemachus under the visitation of the suitors. The resolute air with which he now declared his intention of grappling with life had therefore something comic about it, and Berkeley said, rather incredulously:

"I suppose you'll keep up your reading along with your law?"

"No," replied the other; "Themis is a jealous mistress. No; I'm going to bone right down to it."

"Haven't you changed your ideal of life lately?" asked Clay, a little scornfully.

"Perhaps I have," said Armstrong, "perhaps I've had to."

"What *is* your ideal of life?" I inquired.

"Well, I'll tell you," he answered, draining his coffee-cup solemnly, and putting it down with the manner of a man who has made up his mind. The rest of us arranged ourselves in attitudes of attention. "My ideal is independence," began Armstrong. "I want to live my own life; and as the first condition of independence is money, I'm going for money. Culture and taste, and all that, are well enough when a man can afford it, but for a poor man it means just so many additional wants which he can't gratify. My father is an educated man; a country minister with a small salary and a large family; and his education, instead of being a blessing, has been an actual curse to him. He has pined for all sorts of things which he couldn't have—books, engravings, foreign travel, leisure for study, nice people and nice things about him. I've made up my mind that, whatever else I may be, I won't be poor, and I won't be a minister, and I won't have a wife and brats hanging to me. I tell you that, next to ill health, poverty is the worst thing

that can happen to a man. All the sentimental grievances that are represented in novels and poetry as the deepest of human afflictions,—disappointed ambitions, death of friends, loss of faith, estrangements, having your girl go back on you,—they don't signify very long if a man has sound health and a full purse. The ministers and novel writers and fellows that preach the sentimental view of life don't believe it themselves. It's a kind of professional or literary quackery with them. Just let them feel the pinch of poverty, and then offer them a higher salary or a chance to make a little 'sordid gain' in some way, and see how quick they'll accept the call to 'a higher sphere of usefulness.' Berk, hand over a match, will you; this cigar has gone out."

"Loud cries of 'We will—we will'!" said Berkeley. "But can it be? Has the poick turned cynic, and the sickly sentimentalist become a materialist and a misogynist?"

(Armstrong was our class poet, and had worried the official muse on Presentation Day to the utterance of some four hundred lines filled with allusions to Alma Mater, Friendship's Altar, the Elms of Yale, etc. His piece on that occasion had been "pronounced, by a well-known literary gentleman who was present, equal to the finest productions of our own Willis.")

"I'll bet the cigars," said Doddridge, "that Armstrong marries the first girl he sees in New York."

"Yes," said Clay, "his boarding-house keeper's daughter."

"And has a dozen children before he is forty," added Berkeley; "a dozen kids, and all of them girls. Charley is sure to be a begetter of wenches."

"And writes birthday odes 'To My Infant Daughter' for the 'Home Journal,'" continued Clay.

"No, no," said the victim of this banter, shaking his head solemnly. "I shall give no hostages to Fortune. I mean to live snug and carry as little sail as possible: to leave only the narrowest margin out for Fate to tread on. The man who has the fewest exposed points leads, on the whole, the happiest life. How can a man enjoy himself freely when a piece of defective plumbing, the bursting of a toy pistol, the carelessness of a nurse, may plunge him into a life-long sorrow? I don't say it's a very noble life that I propose to myself, but it's a safe one. I'm too nervous and anxious to stand the responsibilities of matrimony."

"If you can't stand responsibility," said Doddridge, "I don't see why you choose the law for a profession. You don't seem to me cut out for a lawyer anyway. I always thought you meant to be some kind of a literary chap."

"Yes," said Berkeley, "why don't you go for a snug berth under the government, or study for a tutorship here? That's the life that would suit you, old man."

"Not at all," answered Armstrong; "I have a horror of any salaried position, or of any position where a man is obliged to conform his habits and opinions to other people's. It is the worst sort of dependence. Now a lawyer in successful practice, and especially if he is a bachelor, is about as independent as a man can be. His relations with his clients are merely professional, and what he does or thinks privately is nobody's business."

"If you are going to be a mere lawyer," asked Clay, "what becomes of your education and your intellectual satisfactions, etc.?"

"A man can get his best intellectual satisfactions out of the work of his profession," answered Armstrong. "Besides, as to that, there's time enough. Fifteen years of solid work will enable one to put by a fair competence, if he lives carefully and has no one but himself to support; and then he will be free to take up a hobby. Oh, I shall cultivate a hobby or two after awhile. It keeps the mind healthy to have some interest of the kind outside of one's business. I may take to book-collecting or numismatics or raising orchids. Perhaps I may become an authority on ancient armor; time enough for that by and by. And then I can cut over to Europe every summer if I like, and no one to interfere with my down-sittings or my up-risings, my goings-out or my comings-in. Do you know," he went on, after a pause, "how I always look to myself in the glass of the future? I figure myself like old Tulkinghorn, in

'Bleak House,'—going down into his reverberating vaults for a bottle of choice vintage, after the work of the day, and then sitting quietly in the twilight in his dusky, old-fashioned law chambers, sipping his wine while the room fills with the fragrance of southern grapes. The gay old silver-top !"

There was silence for a few minutes after Armstrong had finished his declaration. It was broken by Berkeley, who had risen, and was walking up and down in front of the fountain with his hands thrust into his pockets.

"You couldn't lead that sort of life if you tried," he said ; "you aren't built for it."

"Don't you make any mistake," rejoined the other ; "it's the sort of life I'm going to live."

"It's a cowardly life," retorted Berkeley.

"Did I say it wasn't ? I said it was safe. You can call it what you like."

"Well," replied Berkeley, seating himself again, "my ideal career is just the opposite of that."

"Suppose you explain yours, then," said Armstrong.

Berkeley hesitated a few moments before beginning. He was a lean, tallish fellow, with a Scotch cast of countenance, a small blue eye, high cheek bones, a freckled skin, and whity-brown hair. He had a dry, cautious humor, fed by much out-of-the-way reading. He had been distinguished in college by methodical habits, a want of ambition, a disposition to keep to himself, and a mixture of selfishness and *bonhomie* which made him a cold

friend but an agreeable companion. It was therefore with some surprise that we heard him deliver himself as follows :

"I believe that the greatest mistake a man can make is in not getting enough out of life. I want to lead a full life, to have a wide experience, to develop my whole nature to the utmost, to touch mankind at the largest possible number of points. I want adventure, change, excitement, emotion, suffering even,—I don't care what, so long as it is not stagnation. Just consider what there is on this planet to be seen, learned, enjoyed, and what a miserably small share of it most people appropriate. Why, there are men in my village who have never been outside the county and seldom out of the township ; who have never heard a word of any language but English ; never seen a city or a mountain or the ocean – or, indeed, any body of water bigger than Fresh Pond or the Hogganum River ; never been in a theatre, steamboat, library, or cathedral. Cathedral ! Their conception of a church is limited to the white wooden meeting-house at 'the center.' Their art-gallery is the wagon of a travelling photographer. Their metropolitan hotel is the stoop and bar-room of the 'Uncas House.' Their university is the unpainted school-house on the hill. Their literature is the weekly newspaper from the county town. But take the majority of educated men even. What a rusty, small kind of existence they lead ! They are in a rut, just the same as the others, only

the rut is a trifle wider. If I had my way I would never do the same work or talk with the same people—hardly live in the same place for two days running. Life is too short to do a thing twice. When I come to the end of mine I don't want to say *J'ai manqué la vie;* but make my brag, with the Wife of Bath,

> 'Unto this day it doth myn herte bote
> That I have had my world as in my time.'"

"Well, how are you going to do all those fine things?" inquired Armstrong. "For instance, that about not living in one place two days running. I'm afraid you'll find that inconvenient, not to say expensive."

"Oh, you mustn't take me too literally. I may have to travel on foot or take a steerage passage, but I shall keep going all the same. I haven't made any definite plans yet. I shall probably strike for something in the diplomatic line,—secretary of legation, or some small consulship perhaps. But the principle is the main thing, and the principle is: Don't do anything because it's the nearest and easiest and most obvious thing to do, but make up your mind to get the best. Look at the lazy way in which men accept their circumstances. There is the matter of acquaintance, for instance—we let chance determine it. We know the men that we can't help knowing,—the ones in the next house, cousins and second cousins, business con-

nections, etc. Here at college, now, we get acquainted with the fellows at the eating club or in the same society, or those who happen to sit next us in the class-room, because their names begin with the same letter. That's it; it's just a sample of our whole life. Our friendships, like everything else about us, are determined by the alphabet. We go with the Z's because some arbitrary system of classification has put us among them, instead of fighting our way up to the A's, where we naturally belong. The consequence is that one's friends are mostly dreadful bores."

"I'm sure we are all much obliged to you," murmured Clay, parenthetically.

"There are about two or three thousand people in the world," continued Berkeley, "supremely worth knowing. Why shouldn't *I* know them? —— I will! Everybody knows two or three thousand people,—mostly very stupid people,—or, rather, he lets them know him. Why shouldn't he use some choice in the matter? Why not know Thackeray and Carlyle, Lord Palmerston and the Pope, and the Emperor of China and all the great statesmen, authors, African explorers, military commanders, artists, hereditary nobles, actresses, wits and belles of the best society, instead of putting up with Tom, Dick, and Harry?"

"Berkeley, 'with whom the bell-mouthed flask had wrought!'" exclaimed Clay. "Decidedly, Berk, you should take your coffee without cognac."

"Let me suggest," put in Doddridge, "that

some of those parties you mentioned are not so easy to get introductions to."

"Oh, I say again, you mustn't take me too literally. But even the top swells are easier to know than you think. All that is wanted is a little cheek. But take it in a smaller way; say that we resolve to cultivate the best society within our reach. Doubtless there are numbers of interesting and distinguished people right here in New Haven whose acquaintance it would be worth while to have. But how long would you beggars live here without making the least effort to look them out, and meanwhile put up with the same old every-day bores—like me, or Polisson here? And it's the same way with marriage. A fellow blunders into matrimony with the first attractive girl that gives him the opportunity. He knows, if he takes the time to think about it, that there are a thousand others better than she, if he will wait and look through the world a little. 'Juxtaposition in fine,' as Clough says."

"Of course, with such a brilliant destiny before you, *you'll* never marry," said I.

"Yes, I think I shall. I fancy that the noblest possibilities of life are never realized without marriage. Yes, I can think of nothing finer than to have a lot of manly boys and sweet girls growing up around one. But when I marry it shall be so as to give completeness and expansion to life, not narrowness and dullness. I shall never marry and settle down. Settle down! What a damna-

ble expression that is! A man ought to settle *up*. I mean to have my fling first, too. I should like to gamble a bit at Baden-Baden. I should like to go out to Colorado and have a lick at mining speculations. I want to rough it some too, and see how life is lived close to the bone: ship for a voyage before the mast; enlist for a campaign or two somewhere and have joy of battle; join the gypsies or the Mormons or the Shakers for awhile, and taste all the queerness of things. And then I want to float for another while on the very topmost crest of society. I want to fight a duel or two, elope with a marquise, do a little of everything for the experience's sake, as a man ought to take opium once in his life just to know how it feels."

Whether it was indeed the cognac, or only the unusual excitement attending this outburst of pent-up fire, Berkeley's cheek had got a flush upon it. Perhaps, too, it was owing to the influences of the day and the hour, the splash of the fountain, the rustle of the vine-leaves, and the wavering shadows which played about the court-yard as the gas-jets flickered in the breeze of night, that made his boastful words seem less extravagantly out of character than they otherwise would. The silence which followed his speech was broken by Clay, who sat with his foot on the rim of the fountain, balancing on the hind legs of his chair, and looking thoughtfully at the slender jet as it rose and fell. He still wore the dress suit in which he had

figured on the Commencement platform in the afternoon, and which set off the aristocratic grace of his slight figure. There was a pale intellectual light in his face, and his black eyes had the glow of genius.

"I think," he began, "that Berkeley makes a mistake in confounding a full life with a restless one. I believe in a full experience too, but the satisfactions should be inward ones. Take the matter of foreign travel, for one thing, on which you lay so much stress. It is a great stimulus to the imagination, no doubt; but then foreign countries are accessible to the imagination by other means—through books and art, for example. I think it likely that the reality is, quite as often as not, disappointing. Place, after all, is indifferent. 'The soul is its own place': you can't get rid of yourself by going abroad, and it's himself that a man gets sooner tired of than of anything else. Then as to acquaintances, I don't know that I should care to know personally such men as Thackeray and Carlyle, and the big composers and artists and other people that you mentioned. It might be equally disenchanting. They put the best of themselves into their books, or pictures, or music. I certainly would not seek their society through a formal introduction, at all events. It is hard for a small man to keep his self-respect in face of a great man when he obtains his acquaintance as a special favor. If I could meet some of those fellows, quite naturally and accidentally, on equal

terms, I might like it, but not otherwise. But, leaving that point out of account, I think that the career which Berkeley proposes to himself would turn out very hollow. It would result in the superficial gratification of the curiosity and the senses ; and, as soon as the novelty got rubbed off, what is there left ?"

"So then," said Berkeley, "you've swung into line with Armstrong, have you? You mean to plod along in some professional rut too. What has got into all our idealists ?"

"Not by any means," answered Clay. "Armstrong talks about independence, and yet destines himself to the worst kind of dependence—slavery to money-getting. Most people, it seems to me, spend the best part of their lives not in living, but in getting the means to live. We'll give Armstrong, say twenty years, to lay up enough money to retire on and begin to live. What sort of a position will he be in then to enjoy his independence? His nature will have got so subdued to what it works in that the only safety for him will be to keep on at the law."

"All right! Then I'll keep on," interjected Armstrong.

"What the devil do *you* mean to do then ?" asked Berkeley of Clay.

"I don't quite know yet," replied the latter. "I shall 'loaf and invite my soul' whenever I feel like it. I shall live as I go along, and not postpone it till I am forty. I sha'n't put myself into

any mill that will grind me just so much a day. I need my leisure too badly for that. I presume I shall spend most of my time at first in reading and walking. Then, whenever I think of anything to write I shall write it, and if I can sell what I write to some publisher or other, so much the better. If not, go on as before."

"Meanwhile, where will your bread and butter come from?" asked Armstrong.

"Oh, I sha'n't starve. I can get some sort of hack work—something that won't take much of my time, and which I can do with my left hand. But the great point, after all, is to make your wants simple; to live like an Arab, content with a few dates and a swallow from the gourd. 'Lessen your denominator.' It's easier than raising your numerator, and the quotient is the same."

"No, it's not the same," Berkeley retorted. "Renunciation and enjoyment are not the same. It makes a heap of difference whether you have a thing or simply do without it. The plain living and high thinking philosophy may do for Clay, whose mind to him a kingdom is; but a fellow like me, whose mind is only a small Central American republic, can't live on the revenues of the spirit. The fact is, Clay, you've read too much Emerson. I went into that myself once, but I soon found out that it wouldn't wear. I want mine thicker. The worst thing about the career of a literary man or an artist is that if he fails there are no compensations; and success is mighty un-

certain. Nobody doubts that you are smart enough, Clay, and I am sure we expect great things of you, whatever line you take up. But, for the sake of the argument, suppose you have grubbed along in a small way, living on crusts and water, till you are fifty, without doing any really good work. Then where are you? You haven't had any fun. You've no other string to your bow. You haven't that practical experience of the world which would enable you to turn your hand to something else. You have no influence or reputation; for, of all poor things, poor art of any kind is the worst—hateful to gods and men and columns. In short, where are you? You're out of the dance; you don't count."

"Yes," added Armstrong, "and you've no professional success or solid standing in the community; and, what's worse, you've no money, which might make up for the want of all the rest."

"I don't think you get my meaning. I may fail," said Clay, proudly; "I may never even try to succeed, in your sense of the word. I decline all mean competitions and all low views of success. The noblest ideal of life—at least, the noblest to me—is self-culture in the high meaning of the word; the harmonious development of one's whole nature. Armstrong has drawn a picture of his future in the likeness of old Tulkinghorn. I suppose we are all accustomed to put our anticipations into some such concrete shape before our mind's eye. The typical situation which I am fond of

imagining is something like this : I like to fancy myself sitting in a dark old upper room in some remote farm-house, at the close of a winter day, after three or four hours of steady reading or writing. The room is full of books—the *best* books. There is a little fire on the hearth, there is a dingy curtain at the window. It is solitary and still, and when the light gets too scant to let me read any more, I fill my pipe, and go and stand in the window. Outside, there is a row of leafless elms, and beyond that a dim, wide landscape of lakes and hills, and beyond that a red, windy sunset. I can sit in that window and smoke my pipe and have my own thoughts till the hills grow black. There is no one to say to me 'Go' or 'Come'; no patient to visit ; no confounded case on the docket next morning at nine ; no distasteful, mean, slavish job of any kind. How can I fail to have thoughts worth the thinking, and to live a rich and free life when I breathe every day the bracing air of nature and the great poets ? Isn't such a life in itself the best kind of success, even if a man accomplishes nothing in particular that you can put your hand on ?"

"Yes, I know," said Armstrong, taking a long breath. "I have felt that way too. But a man has got to put all that sternly behind him and do the world's work for the world's wages, if he means to amount to anything. It's only a finer kind of self-indulgence, after all—egoistic Hedonism and that sort of thing."

"It won't be all standing at windows and looking at sunsets," added Doddridge. "Has it ever occurred to you that, before entering on a life of self-denial and devotion to rather vague ideals, a man ought to be mighty sure of himself? Can you keep up the culture business without growing in on yourself unhealthily, and then getting sick of inaction? Don't you think there will be times of disappointment and doubt when you look around and see fellows without half your talents getting ahead of you in the world?"

"Of course," answered Clay, "I shall have to make sacrifices, and I shall have to stick to them when made. But there have always been plenty of people willing to make similar sacrifices for similar compensations. Men have gone out into the wilderness or shut themselves up in the cloister for opportunities of study or self-communion, or for other objects which were perhaps at bottom no more truly devotional than mine. Nowadays such opportunities may be had by any man who will keep himself free from the servitude of a bread-winning profession. It is not necessary now to cry *Ecce in deserto* or *Ecce in penetralibus*. Oh, I shall have my dark days; but whenever the blue devils get thick I shall take to the woods and return to sanity."

"You mean to live in the country, then?" I inquired.

"Yes; most of the time, at any rate. Nature is fully half of life to me."

Again there was a pause.

"Well, you next, Polisson," said Armstrong, finally. "Let's hear what your programme is."

"Oh, nothing in the least interesting," I replied. "My future is all cut and dried. I shall spend the next two years in the south of France—mainly at Lyons—to learn the details of the silk manufacture. Then I shall come home to go into my father's store for a year as a clerk in the importing department. At the close of that year the governor will take me in as junior partner, and I shall marry my second cousin. We shall live with my parents, and I am going to be very domestic, though, as a matter of form, I shall join one or two clubs. I shall go down town every morning at nine, and come up at five."

"Quite a neat little destiny," said Armstrong. "I wish I had your backing. Come, Dodd, what's yours? You're the only man left."

"I haven't made up my mind yet," said Doddridge, slowly.

He was a large, spare man, with a swarthy skin, a wide mouth, a dark, steady eye, and a long jaw. There was an appearance of power and will about him whch was well borne out by his character. He had been a systematic though not a laborious student, and while maintaining a stand comfortably near the head of the class, had taken a course in the Law School during Senior year, doing his double duties with apparent ease. He was a constant speaker in the debates of the Linonian

Society, and the few who attended the meetings of that moribund school of eloquence spoke of Doddridge's speeches as oases in the waste of forensic dispute, being always distinguished by vigor and soundness, though without any literary quality, such as Clay's occasional performances had. Berkeley, who covered his own lazy and miscellaneous reading with the mask of eclecticism, and proclaimed his disbelief in a prescribed course of study, was wont to say that Doddridge was the only man that he knew who was using the opportunites given by the college for all they were worth, and really getting out of "the old curric" that mental discipline which it professed to impart. Though rather taciturn, he was not unsocial, and was fond of his pipe in the evening. He liked a joke, especially if it was of a definite kind, and at some one's expense touching a characteristic weakness of the man. There was at bottom something a little hard about him, though every one agreed that he was a good fellow. We all felt sure that he would make a distinguished success in practical life; and we doubtless thought—if we thought about it at all—that with his clear foresight and habits of steady work, he had already decided upon his career. His words were therefore a surprise.

"What! you don't mean to say that you are going to drift, Dodd?" inquired Armstrong.

"Drift? Well, no; not exactly. I shall keep my steering apparatus well in hand, but I haven't decided yet what port to run for. There's no

hurry. I have an uncle in the Northwest in the lumber business, who would give me a chance. I may go out there and look about awhile at first. If it doesn't promise much, there is the law to fall back upon. My father has a fruit farm at Byzantium in western New York,—where I come from, you know,—and he is part owner of the Byzantium weekly 'Bugle.' I've no doubt I could get on as editor, and go to the Legislature. Or I might do worse than begin on the farm; farming is looking up in that section. I may try several things till I find the right one."

"That's queer," said Armstrong. "I thought you had made up your mind to enter the Columbia Law School."

"Hardly," answered Doddridge, "though I may, after all. The main point is to keep yourself in readiness for any work, and take the best thing that turns up—like Berkeley here," he added, drily.

Armstrong looked at his watch and remarked that it was nearly midnight.

"Boys," said I, "in fifteen years from to-night let's have a supper here and see how each man of us has worked out his theory of life, and how he likes it as far as he has got."

"Oh, give us twenty," said Doddridge, laughing, as we all arose and prepared to break up. "No one accomplishes anything in this latitude before he is forty."

* * * * * *

It was in effect just fifteen years from the summer of our graduation that I started out to look up systematically my quondam classmates and compare notes with them. The course of my own life had been quite other than I had planned. For one thing, I had lived in New Orleans and not in New York, and my occasions had led me seldom to the North. The first visit I paid was to Berkeley. I had heard that he was still unmarried, and that he had been for years settled, as minister, over a small Episcopal parish on the Hudson. The steamer landed me one summer afternoon at a little dock on the west bank; and after obtaining from the dock-keeper precise directions for finding the parsonage, I set out on foot. After a walk of a mile along a road skirted by handsome country seats, but contrasting strangely in its loneliness with the broad thoroughfare of the river constantly occupied by long tows of barges and rafts, I came to the rectory gate. The house was a stone cottage, covered with trailers, and standing well back from the road. In the same inclosure, surrounded by a grove of firs, was a little stone chapel with high pitched roof and rustic belfry. In front of the house I spied a figure which I recognized as Berkeley. He was in his shirt-sleeves, and was pecking away with a hoe at the gravel walk, whistling meanwhile his old favorite 'Bonny Doon.' He turned as I came up the driveway, and regarded me at first without recognition. He, for his part, was little changed by time. There was

the same tall, narrow-shouldered, slightly stooping figure ; the face, smooth-shaved, with a spot of wintry red in the cheek, and the old humorous cast in the small blue eyes.

"You don't know me from Adam," I said, pausing in front of him.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, directly. "Polisson, old man, upon my conscience I'm glad to see you, but I didn't know you till you spoke. You've been having the yellow fever, haven't you? Come in—come into the house."

We passed in through the porch, which was covered with sweet-pea vines trained on strings, and entered the library, where Berkeley resumed his coat. The room was lined with book-shelves loaded to the ceiling, while piles of literature had overflowed the cases and stood about on the floor in bachelor freedom. After the first greetings and inquiries, Berkeley carried my valise upstairs, and then returning, said :

"I'm a methodical though not methodistical person, or rather parson (excuse the Fullerism); and as you have got to stay with me till I let you go, that is, several days at the least (don't interrupt), I'll keep a little appointment for the next hour, if you will excuse me. A boy comes three times a week to blow the bellows for my organ practice. Perhaps you would like to step into the church and hear me."

I assented, and we went out into the yard and found the boy already waiting in the church

porch. Berkeley and his assistant climbed into the organ loft, while I seated myself in the chancel to listen. The instrument was small but sweet, and Berkeley really played very well. The interior of the little church was plain to bareness; but the sun, which had fallen low, threw red lights on the upper part of the undecorated walls, and rich shadows darkened the lower half. Through the white, pointed windows I saw the trembling branches of the firs. I had been hurrying for a fortnight past over heated railways, treading fiery pavements, and lodging in red-hot city hotels. But now the music and the day's decline filled me with a sense of religious calm, and for a moment I envied Berkeley. After his practicing was over the organist locked the chapel door, and we paced up and down in the fir-grove on the matting of dark red needles, and watched the river, whose eastern half still shone in the evening light. After supper we sat out on the piazza, which commanded a view of the Hudson. Berkeley opened a bottle of Chablis and produced some very old and dry Manilla cheroots, and, leaning back in our wicker chairs, we proceeded to "talk Cosmos."

"You are very comfortably fixed here," I began; "but this is not precisely what I expected to find you doing, after your declaration of principles, fifteen years ago, you may remember, on our Commencement night."

"Fifteen years! So it is—so it is," he answered, with a sigh. "Well, *l'homme propose*, you know.

I don't quite remember what it was that I said on that occasion : dreadful nonsense, no doubt. As Thackeray says, a boy *is* an ass. Whatever it was, it proceeded, I suppose, from some temporary mood rather than from any permanent conviction ; though, to be sure, I slipped into this way of life almost by accident at first. But, being in, I have found it easy to continue. I am rather too apt, perhaps, to stay where I am put. I am a quietist by constitution." He paused, and I waited for him to enter upon a fuller and more formal apology. Finally, he went on much as follows :

"Just after I left college I made application through some parties at Washington for a foreign consulate. While I was waiting for the application to be passed on (it was finally unsuccessful), I came up here to visit my uncle, who was the rector of this parish. He was a widower, without any children, and the church was his hobby. It is a queer little affair, something like the old field-kirks or chapels of ease in some parts of England It was built partly by my uncle and partly by a few New York families who have country places here, and who use it in the summer. This is all glebe land," he said, indicating, with a sweep of his hand, the twilight fields below the house sloping down toward the faintly glimmering river. "My uncle had a sort of prescription or lien by courtesy on the place. There's not much salary to speak of, but he had a nice plum of his own, and lived inexpensively. Well, that first summer I moped

about here, got acquainted with the summer residents, read a good deal of the time, took long walks into the interior,—a rough, aboriginal country, where they still talk Dutch,—and waited for an answer to my application. When it came at last, I fretted about it considerably, and was for starting off in search of something else. I had an idea of getting a place as botanist on Coprolite's survey of the Nth parallel, and I wrote to New Haven for letters. I thought it would be a good outdoor, horseback sort of life, and might lead to something better. But that fell through, and meanwhile the dominie kept saying: 'My dear fellow, don't be in too much of a hurry to begin. Young America goes so fast nowadays that it is like the dog in the hunting story,—a *little* bit ahead of the hare. Why not stay here for awhile and ripen—ripen?' The dominie had a good library,—all my old college favorites, old Burton, old Fuller, and Browne, etc., and it seemed the wisest course to follow his advice for the present. But in the fall my uncle had a slight stroke of paralysis, and really needed my help for awhile; so that what had been a somewhat aimless life, considered as loafing, became all at once a duty. At first he had a theological student, from somewhere across the river, come to stay in the house and read service for him on Sundays. But he was a ridiculous animal, whose main idea of a minister's duties was to intone the responses in a sonorous manner. He used to practice this on

week days in his surplice, and I remember especially the cadence with which he delivered the sentence : ' Yea, like a broken *wall* shall ye be and as a ruined *hedge*.'

" He got the huckleberry, as we used to say in college, on that particular text, and it has stuck by me ever since. The dominie fired him out after a fortnight, and one day said to me : ' Jack, why don't *you* study for orders and take up the succession here? You are a bookworm, and the life seems to be to your liking.' Of course, I declined very vigorously in the beginning, though offering to stay on so long as the dominie needed my help. I used to do lay reading on Sundays when he was too feeble. Gradually, ' the idea of the life did sweetly creep into my study of imagination.' The quaintness of the place appealed to me. And here was a future all cut out for me : no preliminary struggle, no contact with vulgar people, no cut-throat competition, but everything gentlemanly and independent about it. I had strong doubts touching my theology, and used to discuss them with my uncle ; but he said,—and said rightly, I now think,—' You young fellows in college fancy that it's a mighty fine, bold thing to effect radicalism and atheism, and the Lord knows what all ; but it won't stick to you when you get older. Experience will soften your heart, and you'll find after awhile that belief and doubt are not matters of the pure reason, but of the will. It is a question of *attitude*. Besides, the church is broad

enough to cover a good many private differences in opinion. It isn't as if you were going to be a blue-nosed Presbyterian. You can stay here and make your studies with me, instead of going into a seminary, and when you are ready to go before the bishop I'll see that you get the right send-off.' In short, here I am! My uncle died two years after, when I was already in orders, and I've been here ever since."

"I should think you would get lonely sometimes, and make a strike for a city parish," I suggested.

"Why—no, I don't think I should care for ordinary parish work. The beauty of my position here is its uniqueness. In winter I keep the church open for the Aborigines till they get snowed up and stop coming, and then I put down to New York for a month or two of work at the Astor Library. Last winter I held service for two Sundays running with one boy for congregation. Finally I announced to him that the church would be closed until spring."

"What in the ——: well, what do you find to do all alone up here?"

"Oh, there's always plenty to do, if you'll only do it. I've been cultivating some virtuosities, among other things. Remind me to show you my etchings when we go in. Did you notice, perhaps, that little head over the table, on the north wall? No? Then I smatter botany some. I'll let you look over my *hortus siccus* before you go. It has some very rare ferns; one of them is a new species,

and Fungus—who exchanges with me—swore that he was going to have it named after me. I sent the first specimen to have it described in his forthcoming report. But doubtless all this sort of thing is a bore to you. Well, lately I have been going into genealogy, and I find it more and more absorbing. Those piles of blank-books and manuscripts on the floor at the south end are all crammed with genealogical notes and material."

"I should think you would find it pretty dry fodder," I said.

"That is because you take an outside, unsympathetic view of it. Now, to an amateur it's anything but dry. There is as much excitement in hunting down a missing link in a pedigree that you have been on the trail of for a long time, as there is in the chase of any other kind of game."

"Do you ever get across the water? Travel, if I remember right, played a large part in your scheme of life once."

"Yes; I've been over once, for a few months. But my income, though very comfortable for the statics of existence, is rather short for the dynamics, and so I mostly stay at home."

"Did you meet any interesting people over there? Any of the crowned heads, famous wits, etc., whom you once proposed to cultivate?"

"No; nobody in particular. I went in a very quiet way. I had some good letters to people in England, but I didn't present them. The idea of introductions became a bore as I got nearer to it."

"And, of course, you didn't elope with the marquise?"

"Was that in my scheme? Well—no, I did not."

"You might have done worse, old man. You ought to have a wife, to keep you from getting rusty up here. And, besides, a fellow that goes so much into genealogy should take some interest in posterity. You ought to cultivate the science practically."

"Oh, I'm past all danger of matrimony now," said Berkeley, with a laugh. "There was a girl that I was rather sweet on a few years ago. I was looking up a pedigree for her papa, and I found that I was related to her myself, in eight different ways, though none of them very near. I explained it to her one evening. It took me an hour to do it, and I fancy she thought it a little slow. At all events, when I afterward hinted that we might make the eight ways nine, she answered that our relationship was so intricate already that she couldn't think of complicating it any further. No, you may put me down as safe."

After this, we sat listening in silence to the distant beat of paddle-wheels where a steamer was moving up river.

"The river is a deal of company," resumed my host. "Thirty-six steamers pass here every twenty-four hours. That now is the *Mary Powell*."

"Well," I said, answering not so much to his last remark as to the whole trend of his autobiog-

raphy, "I suppose you are happy in this way of life, since you seem to prefer it. But it would be terribly monotonous to me."

"Happy?" replied Berkeley, doubtfully. "I don't know. Happiness is a subjective matter. You *are* happy if you think yourself so. As for me, I cultivate an obsolete mood — the old-fashioned humor of melancholy. I don't suppose now that a light-hearted, French kind of chap like you can understand, in the least, what those fine, crusty old Elizabethans meant when they wrote,

> 'There's naught in this life sweet,
> If man were wise to see't,
> But only melancholy.'

This noisy generation has lost their secret. As for me, I am content with the grays and drabs. I think the brighter colors would disturb my mood. I know it's not a large life, but it is a safe one."

I did not at the moment remember that this had been Armstrong's very saying fifteen years ago, but some unconscious association led me to mention him.

"Armstrong and you have changed places in one respect, I should think," said I. "He is keeping a boarding-school somewhere in Connecticut. And instead of leading a Tulkinghorny existence in the New York University building, as he firmly intended, he has married and produced a numerous offspring, I hear."

"Yes, poor fellow!" said Berkeley; "I fancy

that he is dreadfully overrun and hard up. There always was something absurdly domestic about Armstrong. They say he has grown red, fat, and bald. Think of a man with Armstrong's education—and he had some talent, too—keeping a sort of Dotheboys Hall! I haven't seen him for eight or nine years. The last time was at Jersey City, and I had just time to shake hands with him. He was with a lot of other pedagogues, all going up to a teachers' convention, or some such dreary thing, at Albany."

I had an opportunity for verifying Berkeley's account of Armstrong a few days after my conversation with the former. The Pestalozzian Institute, in the pleasant little village of Thimbleville, was situated, as its prospectus informed the public, on "one of the most elegant residence streets, in one of the healthiest and most beautiful rural towns of Eastern Connecticut." Over the entrance gate was a Roman arch bearing the inscription "Pestalozzian Institute" in large gilt letters. The temple of learning itself was a big, bare, white house at some distance from the street, with an orchard and kitchen garden on one side, and a roomy play-ground on the other. The latter was in possession of some small boys, who were kicking a broken-winded foot-ball about the field with an amount of noise greatly in excess of its occasion. To my question where I could find Mr. Armstrong, they answered eagerly: "Mr. Armstrong? Yes, sir. You go right into the hall, and knock on the

first door to the right, and he'll come—or some one."

The door to the large square entry stood wide open, and through another door opposite, which was ajar, I saw long tables, and heard the clatter of dishes being removed, while a strong smell of dinner filled the air. I knocked at the door on the right, but no one appeared. Finally, a chubby girl of about ten summers came running round the corner of the house and into the front door. She was eating an apple, and gazed at me wonderingly.

"Is Mr. Armstrong in?" I asked.

"Yes, sir; he's about somewhere. Walk into the parlor, please, and sit down, and I'll find him."

I entered the room on the right, which was a bleak and official-looking apartment,—apparently the reception-room where parents held interviews with the instructor of youth, or tore themselves from the parting embraces of homesick sons at the beginning of a new term. There is always something depressing about the parlor of an "institution" of any kind, and I could not help feeling sorry for Armstrong, as I waited for him, seated on a sofa covered with faded rep. At length the door of an inner room opened, and the principal of the Pestalozzian Institute waddled across the floor with his hand held out, crying:

"Franky Polisson, how are you?"

He certainly had grown stout, and his light hair

had retreated from the forehead. He wore glasses and was dressed in a suit of rusty black, with a high vest which gave him a ministerial look—a much more ministerial look than Berkeley had. His pantaloons presented that appearance which tailors describe as "kneeing out." He sat down and we chatted for half an hour. The little girl had followed him into the room, and behind her came another three or four years her junior. The older one stood by his side, and he kept his arm around her, while he held the younger on his knee. They were both pretty, healthy-looking children, and kept their eyes fixed on "the man."

"Are those your own kids?" I inquired presently.

"Yes, two of them. I have six, you know," he answered, with a fond sigh: "five girls and one boy. The lasses are rather in the majority."

"I heard you were quite a *paterfamilias*," I said. "Won't you come and kiss me, little girl?"

To this proposal the elder answered by burying her head bashfully in her father's shoulder, while the smaller one simply opened her eyes wider and stared with more fixed intensity.

"Oh, by the way," exclaimed Armstrong, "of course you'll take tea with us and spend the evening. I wish I could offer to sleep you here; but the fact is, Mrs. Armstrong's sister is with us for a few days, and the parents of one of my boys, who is sick, are also staying here; so that my guest chambers are full."

"Don't mention it," I said. "I couldn't stay over night. I've got to be in New York in the morning, and must take the nine-o'clock train. But I'll stay to supper and much obliged, if you are sure I sha'n't take up too much of your time."

"Not the least—not the least. This is a half holiday, and nothing in particular to do." He bustled to the door and called out loudly, "Mother! Mother!"

There was no response.

"Nelly," he commanded, "run and find your mamma, and tell her that Mr. Polisson—from New Orleans—an old classmate of papa's, will be here to tea. That's a good girl. Polisson, put on your hat and let's go round the place. I want to show you what an establishment I've got here."

We accordingly made the tour of the premises, Armstrong doing the cicerone impressively, and every now and then urging me with emphatic hospitality to come and spend a week—a fortnight—longer, if I chose, during the summer vacation.

"Bring Mrs. Polisson and the kids. Bring 'em all," he said. "It will do them good; the air here is fine; eleven hundred feet above the sea. No malaria—no typhoid. I laid out four hundred dollars last year on sewerage."

It being a half holiday, most of the big boys had gone to a pond in the neighborhood for a swim, under the conduct of the classical master,—a Yale graduate, Armstrong explained, who had stood

fourth in his class, "and a very able fellow,—very able."

But while we sat at tea in Armstrong's family dining-room, which adjoined the school commons, we were made aware of the return of the swimming party by the constant shuffle and tramp of feet through the hall and the noise of feeding in the next room. At our table were present Mrs. Armstrong, her sister (who had a frightened air when addressed and conversed in monosyllables), the parents of the sick pupil, and Armstrong's two eldest children. I surmised that the younger children had been in the habit of sharing in the social meal, and had been crowded out on this occasion by the number of guests; for I heard them *fremuit*ing *in cavere* behind a door through which the waitress passed out and in, bringing plates of waffles. The remonstrances of the waitress were also audible, and, when the wailing rose high, my hostess's face had a distrait expression, as of one prepared at any moment for an irruption of infant Goths.

Mrs. Armstrong was a vivacious little woman, who, I conjectured, had once been a village belle, with some pretensions to *espièglerie* and the fragile prettiness common among New England country girls. But the bearing and rearing of a family of children, and the matronizing of a houseful of hungry school-boys in such a way as to make ends meet, had substituted a faded and worried look for her natural liveliness of expression. She bore up

bravely, however, against the embarrassments of the occasion. In particular, it pleased her to take a facetious view of college life.

"Oh, Mr. Polisson," she cried, "I am afraid that you and my husband were very gay young men when you were at college together. Oh, don't tell me; I know—I know. I've heard of some of your scrapes."

I protested feebly against this impeachment, but Armstrong winked at me with the air of a sly dog, and said:

"It's no use, Polisson. You can't fool Mrs. A. Buckingham and one or two of the fellows have been here to dinner occasionally, and I'm afraid they've given us away."

"Yes," she affirmed, "Mr. Buckingham was one of you too, I guess, though he *is* the Rev. Mr. Buckingham now. Oh, he has told me."

"You remember old Buck?" put in Armstrong. "He is preaching near here—settled over a church at Bobtown."

"Yes," I answered, "I remember there was such a man in the class, but really I didn't know that he was—ah—such a character as you seem to infer, Mrs. Armstrong."

"Oh, he has quieted down now, I assure you," said the lady. "He is as prim and proper as a Methodist meeting-house. Why, he *has* to be, you know."

This amusing fiction of the wildness of Armstrong's youth had evidently become a family

tradition, and even, by a familiar process, an article of belief in his own mind. It reminded me grotesquely of *Justice Shallow's* reminiscences with *Sir John Falstaff*: "Ha, Cousin Silence, that thou hadst seen that, that this knight and I have seen. . . . Jesu, Jesu, the mad days that I have spent!"

The resemblance became still stronger when, as we rose from the table, the good fellow beckoned me into a closet which opened off the dining-room, saying, in a hoarse whisper:

"Here, Polisson, come in here."

He was uncorking a large bottle half-filled with some red liquid, and as he poured a portion of this into two glasses he explained:

"I don't have this sort of thing on the table, you understand, on account of the children and my—ah—position. It would make talk. But I tell you this is some of the real old stuff. How!" And he held his glass up to the light, regarding it with the one eye of a connoisseur, and then drank down its contents with a smack. I was considerably astonished, on doing the same, to discover that this dark beverage—which, from Armstrong's manner, I had been prepared to find something at least as wicked as absinthe—was simply and solely Bordeaux of a mild quality. After this Bacchanalian proceeding we went out into the orchard, which was reserved for family use, and sat on a bench under an apple-tree. Armstrong called his little boy who had been at supper with us and gave him a whispered message, together with some

small change. The messenger disappeared, and after a short absence returned with two very domestic cigars, transparently bought for the nonce from some neighboring grocer. "Have a smoke," commanded my host, and we solemnly kindled the rolls of yellow leaf, Armstrong puffing away at his with the air of a man who, though intrusted by destiny with the responsibility of molding the characters of youth, has not forgotten how to be a man of the world on occasion.

"Well, Charley," I began, after a few preliminary draughts, "you seem to have a good thing of it. Your school is prosperous, I understand; the work suits you; you have a mighty pretty family of children growing up, and your health appears to be perfect."

"Yes," he admitted; "I suppose I ought to be thankful. I certainly enjoy great mercies. It's a warm, crowded kind of life; plenty of affection,—plenty of anxiety too, to be sure. I like to have the boys around me; it keeps one's heart fresh, though in a way it's sometimes wearing to the nerves. Yes, I like the young rascals—I like them. But, of course, it has its drawbacks. Most careers have," he added, in a burst of commonplace.

"It is not exactly the career that you had cut out for yourself," I suggested, "when we talked our plans over, you remember, that last evening at New Haven."

"No, it's not," he acknowledged; "but perhaps it is a better one. What was it I said then?

I really don't recall it. Something very silly, no doubt."

"Oh, you said, in a general way, that you were going in for money and celibacy and selfishness,—just as you have *not* done."

"Yes, yes; I know, I remember now," he said, laughing. "Boys are great fools with their brag of what they are going to do and be. Life knocks it out of them fast enough; they learn to do what they must."

"Do you ever write any poetry nowadays?"

"No, no; not I. The muse has given me the go-by completely. Except for some occasional verses for a school festival or something of the kind, which I grind out now and then, I've sunk my rhyming dictionary deeper than ever plummet sounded. The chief disadvantage of running a big school like this," he continued, with a sigh, "is the want of leisure and retirement to enable a man to keep up his studies. Sometimes I actually ache for solitude—for a few weeks or months of absolute loneliness and silence. Mrs. Armstrong has fixed me up a nice little private study,—remind me to take you in there before you go,—where I keep my books, etc. But the children will find their way in, and then I'm seldom undisturbed anywhere for more than an hour at a time; there's always some call on me,—something wanted that no one else can see to."

"You ought to swap places with Berkeley for

awhile. He's got more leisure than he knows what to do with."

"Berkeley! Well, what's he up to now? Philately? Arboriculture? What's his last fad? You've seen him lately, you said. I met him for a minute in New York, a few years ago, and he told me he was going to an old book auction."

"He's got genealogy at present," I explained.

"Genealogy! What hay! What sawdust! Aren't there enough live people to take an interest in, without grubbing up dead ones from tombstones and town clerks' records? Berkeley must be a regular old bachelor antiquary by this time, with all human sympathy dried out of him. No, I wouldn't change with *him*. Would we, fatty?" he said, appealing to a small offspring of uncertain sex which had just toddled out the door and across the gangway to kiss its papa good-night.

I took leave of Armstrong and his interesting family with a sense of increased liking. His worldliness, good nature, and simple little enthusiasms and self-satisfactions had somehow kept him young, and he seemed quite the old Armstrong of college days. I afterward learned that the excellent fellow had just finished his law studies, and was preparing to enter upon practice, when his father's health failed, forcing him to give up his parish, and leaving a number of younger brothers and sisters partly dependent on Armstrong. He had accordingly taken the first situation that promised a fair salary, and, having got started

upon the work of teaching, had been unable to let go until it was too late; had, indeed, got deeper and deeper in, by falling in love and impulsively marrying at the first opportunity, and finally setting up for himself at the Pestalozzian Institute. Poor fellow! Good fellow! *Amico mio, non della fortuna.*

My next call was upon Clay, who had rooms in the Babel building in New York, and was reported to be something of a Bohemian. He received me in a smoking jacket and slippers. He had grown a full beard which hid his finely cut features. His black eyes had the old fire, but his skin was sallower, and I thought that his manner had a touch of listlessness mingled with irritability and defiance. He was glad to see me; but inclined to be at first, not precisely distant, yet by no means confidential. After awhile, however, he thawed out and became more like the Clay whom I remembered—our college genius, the brilliant, the admired, in those days of eager hero-worship. I told him of my visits to Berkeley and Armstrong.

"Berkeley I see now and then in town," said Clay. "It was rather queer of him to turn parson, but I guess he doesn't let his theology bother him much. He has a really superior collection of etchings, I am told. Armstrong I haven't seen for years. I knew he was a pedagogue somewhere in Connecticut."

"Don't you ever go to the class reunions?" I asked.

"Class reunions? Well, hardly."

"I should think you would; you are so near New Haven."

"How charmingly provincial you are — you Southern chaps! Don't you know that, to a man who lives in New York, nothing is near? Besides, as to my classmates at old Yale and all that, I would go round a corner to avoid meeting most of them."

I expressed myself as duly shocked by this sentiment, and presently I inquired:

"Well, Clay, how are you getting on, anyway?"

"That's a d—— general question. How do you want me to answer it?"

"Oh, not at all, if you don't like."

"Well, don't get miffed. Suppose I answer, 'Pretty well, I thank you, sir.' How will that do?'

"Are you writing anything now?"

"I'm always scribbling something or other. At present, I've got the position of dramatic critic on the 'Daily Boreas,' which is not a very bad bore, and keeps the pot boiling. And I do more or less work of a hack kind for the magazines and cyclopedias, etc.'

"I thought you were on the 'Weekly Prig.' Berkeley or somebody told me so."

"So I was at one time, but I got out of it. The work was drying me up too fast. The concern is run by a lot of cusses who have failed in various

brancnes of literature themselves, and undertake, in consequence, to make it unpleasant for every one else who tries to write anything. I got so that I could sling as cynical a quill as the rest of them. But the trick is an easy one and hardly worth learning. It's a great fraud, this business of reviewing. Here's a man of learning, for instance, who has spent years of research on a particular work. He has collected a large library, perhaps, on his subject; knows more about it than any one else living. Then along comes some insolent little whipper-snapper,—like me,—whose sole knowledge of the matter in hand is drawn from the very book that he pretends to criticise, and patronizes the learned author in a book notice. No, I got out of it; I hadn't the cheek."

"I bought your book,"* said I, "as soon as it came out."

"That's more than the public did."

"Yes, and I read it, too."

"No! Did you, now? That's true friendship. Well, how did you like it? Did you get your money's worth?"

I hesitated a moment and then answered:

"It was clever, of course. Anything that you write would be sure to be that. But it didn't appear to get down to hard-pan or to take a firm grip on life—did it?"

"Ah, that's what the critics said,—only they've

* Dialogues and Romances. By E. Clay. New York: Pater & Sons, 1874.

got a set of phrases for expressing it. They said it was amateurish, that it was in a falsetto key, etc."

"Well, how does it strike you, yourself? You know that it didn't come out of the deep places of your nature, don't you? You feel that you've got better behind?"

"Oh, I don't know. A man does what he can. I rather think it's the best I can do at present."

"Why don't you go at some more serious work; some *magnum opus* that would bring your whole strength into play?"

"A *magnum opus*, my dear fellow!" replied Clay, with a shade of irritation in his voice. "You talk as if a *magnum opus* could be done for the wishing. Why don't *you* do a *magnum opus*, then?"

"Why don't *I*? Oh, I'm not a literary fellow—never professed to be. What a question!"

"Well, no more am I, perhaps. I don't think any better of the stuff that I scribble than you do. It's all an experiment with me. I'm trying my brushes—trying my brushes. Perhaps I may be able to do something stronger some day, and perhaps not. But at all events I sha'n't force my mood. I shall wait for my inspiration. One thing I've noticed, that as a man grows older he loses his spontaneity and gets more critical with himself. I could do more, no doubt, if I would only let myself go. But I'm like this meerschaum here,—a hard piece and slow in coloring."

"Well, meanwhile you might do something in

the line of scholarship, a history or a volume of critical essays—'Hours with the Poets,' or something of that kind, that would bring in the results of your reading. Have you seen Brainard's book? It seemed to me work that was worth doing. But you could do something of the same kind, only much better, without taking your hands out of your pockets."

Brainard was a painstaking classmate of ours, who had been for some years Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy, English Literature, and European History, in a Western university, and had recently published a volume entitled "Theism and Pantheism in the Literature of the English Renaissance," which was well spoken of, and was already in its third edition.

"Yes, I've seen the stuff," said Clay. "My unhappy country swarms with that sort of thing: books about books, and books about other books about books—like the big fleas and little fleas. It's not literature; it's a parasitic growth that infests literature. I always say to myself, with the melancholy Jaques, whenever I have to look over a book by Brainard or any such fellow, 'I think of as many matters as he; but I give Heaven thanks and make no boast of them.' No, I don't care to add anything to that particular rubbish heap. You know Emerson said that the worst poem is better than the best criticism of it. The trouble with me is that what I want to do I can't do—at present; what I can do I don't think it worth while to do—

worth my while, at least. Some one else may do it and get the credit and welcome."

"But you do a good deal of work that you don't care about, as it is," I objected.

"Of course. A man must live, and so I do the nearest thing and the one that pays quickest. I got eighty dollars, now, for that last screed in 'The Reservoir.'"

"But," I persisted, "I thought that money-making had no part in your scheme. You could make more money in a dozen other businesses."

"So I could," he answered; "but they all involve some form of slavery. Now, I am my own master. After all, every profession has its drudgery, and literary drudgery is not the worst."

"Well," I conceded, "independent of what you accomplish, I suppose your way of life furnishes as many daily satisfactions as any. I sometimes envy you and Berkeley your freedom from business cares and your opportunities for study. What becomes of most men's college training, for example? By Jove! I picked up a Greek book the other day, and I couldn't read three words running. Now, I take it, you manage to keep up your classics, among other things."

"Oh, my way of life has its compensations," he answered. "But Sydney Smith—wasn't it?—said that life was a middling affair, anyway. As for the classics, etc., I find that reading and study lose much of their stimulus unless they get an issue in action,—unless one can apply them directly toward

his own work. I often think that, if I were fifteen or even ten years younger, I would go into some branch of natural science. A scientific man always seems to me peculiarly happy in the healthy character of his work. He can keep himself apart from it. It is objective, impersonal, makes no demand on his emotions. Now a writing man has to put himself into his work. He has to keep looking out all the time for impressions, material; to keep trying to enlarge and deepen his own experience, and he gets self conscious and loses his freshness in the process."

"I am surprised to find you in New York," said I, by way of changing the subject. "I thought you had laid out to live in the country. Do you remember that pretty little word-picture of a winter afternoon that you drew us—something in the style of an *Ian Maclaren* landscape? I expected to find you domesticated in a Berkshire farm-house."

"Yes, I remember. I tried it. But I find it necessary, for my work, to be in New York. The newspapers—confound 'em!—won't move into the woods. But, after all, place is indifferent. See here; this isn't bad."

He drew aside the window curtain, and I looked out over a wilderness of roofs to the North River and the Palisades tinged with a purple light. The ferry boats and tugs plying over the water in every direction, the noise of the steam whistles, and the clouds of white vapor floating on the clear air, made an inspiriting scene.

"I'm up among the architects here," continued Clay; "nothing but the janitor's family between me and the roof."

We talked awhile longer, and on taking leave, I said:

"I shall be on the lookout for something big from you one of these days. You know what we always expected of you. So don't lose your grip, old man."

"Who knows?" he replied. "It doesn't rest with me, but with the *daimon*."

I was unable to visit Doddridge, the remaining member of our group. He lived in the thriving town of Wahee, Minnesota, and I had heard of him, in a general way, as highly prosperous. He was a prominent lawyer and successful politician, and had lately been appointed United States district judge, after representing his section in the State Senate for a term or two. I wrote to him, congratulating him on his success and asking for details. I mentioned also my visits to Berkeley, Armstrong, and Clay. I got a prompt reply from Doddridge, from which I extract such portions as are material to this narrative:

"The first few months after I left college I traveled pretty extensively through the West, making contracts with the farmers as agent for a nursery and seed-farm in my part of the country, but really with the object of spying out the land and choosing a place to settle in. Finally I lit on Wahee, and made up my mind that it was a town with a future. It was bound to be a railroad center. It had a first-rate agricultural country

around it, and a rich timber region a little further back ; and it already had an enterprising little pop. growing rapidly. To-day Wahee is as smart a city of its inches as there is in the Northwest. I squatted right down here, got a little raise from the old man, and put it all into building lots. I made a good thing of it, and paid it all back in six years with eight per cent. interest. Meanwhile, I went into Judge Pratt's law office and made my salt by fitting his boy for college—till I learned enough law to earn a salary. The judge was an old Waheer — belonged to the time-honored aristocracy of the place, having been here at least fifteen years before I came. He got into railroads after awhile (is president now of the Wahee and Heliopolis Bee-line), and left his law practice to me. I married his daughter Alice in 1875. She is a Western girl, but she was educated at Vassar. We have two boys. If you ever come out our way, Polisson you must put up with us for as long as you can stay. I would like to show you the country about here and have you ride after my team. I've got a pair that can do it inside three minutes. Do you remember Liddell of our class? He is an architect, you know. I got him to come to Wahee, and he has all he can do putting up business blocks. We have got some here equal to anything in Chicago. . . . .

" Yes, I am United States judge for this district. There is not much money in it, but it will help me professionally by and by. I shall not keep it long. Do I go into politics much, you ask. I used to, but I've got through for the present. The folks about here wanted to run me for Congress last term, but I hadn't any use for it. As to what you are kind enough to say about my ' success,' etc., whatever success I have had is owing to nothing but a capacity for hard work, which is the only talent that I lay claim to. They want a man out here who will do the work that comes to hand, and keep on doing it till something better turns up. . . .

" So Berkeley has turned out a dilettante instead of an African explorer. I heard he was a minister. He does not seem to have much ambition even in that line of life. I should think

Armstrong had got the right kind of place for him. He was a good fellow, but never had much practical ability. You say very little about Clay. How is old 'Sweetness and Light,' any way? I saw some fluff of his in one of the magazines,—a 'romance' I think he called it. This is not an age for scribbling romances. The country wants something solider. I never took much stock in philosophers like Berkeley and Clay. There is the same thing the trouble with them both: they don't want to do any hard work, and they conceal their laziness under fine names,—culture, transcendentalism, and what not? 'Feeble and restless youths, born to inglorious days.'"

This letter may be supplemented by another,—say Exhibit B,—which I received from Clay not long after:

"My dear Polisson: It occurs to me that your question the other day, as to how I was 'getting on,' did not receive as candid an answer as it deserved. I am afraid that you carried away an impression of me as of a man who suspected himself to be a failure, but had not the manliness to acknowledge it. You will say, perhaps, that there are all degrees of half success short of absolute failure. But I say no. In the career which I have chosen, to miss of success—pronounced, unquestionable success—is to fail; and I am not weak enough to hide from myself on which side of the line I fall. The line is a very distinct one, after all. The fact is, I took the wrong turning, and it is too late to go back. I am a case of arrested development—a common enough case. I might give plenty of excellent excuses to my friends for not having accomplished what they expected me to. But the world doesn't want apologies; it wants performance.

"You will think this letter a most extraordinary outburst of morbid vanity. But while I can afford to have you think me a failure, I couldn't let you go on thinking me a fraud. That must be my excuse for writing.

"Yours, as ever, E. Clay."

This letter moved me deeply by its characteristic mingling of egotism with elevation of feeling. As I held it open in my hand, and thought over my classmates' fortunes, I was led to make a few reflections. From the fact that Armstrong and Berkeley were leading lives that squarely contradicted their announced ideas and intentions, it was an obvious but not therefore a true inference that circumstance is usually stronger than will. Say, rather, that the species of necessity which consists in character and inborn tendency is stronger than any resolution to run counter to it.

Both Armstrong and Berkeley, on our Commencement night, had spoken from a sense of their own limitations, and in violent momentary rebellion against them. But, in talking with them fifteen years later, I could not discover that the lack of correspondence between their ideal future and their actual present troubled them much. It is matter of common note that it is impossible to make one man realize another's experience; but it is often quite as hard to make him recover a past stage of his own consciousness.

These, then, had bent to the force of chance or temperament. But Clay had shaped his life according to his programme, and had the result been happier? He who gets his wish often suffers a sharper disappointment than he who loses it. "*So tauscht uns also bald die Hoffnung, bald das Gehoffte*," says the great pessimist, and Fate is never more ironical than when she humors our

whim. Doddridge alone, who had thrown himself confidingly into the arms of the Destinies, had obtained their capricious favors.

I cannot say that I drew any counsel, civil or moral, from these comparisons. Life is deeper and wider than any particular lesson to be learned from it; and just when we think that we have at last guessed its best meanings, it laughs in our face with some paradox which turns our solution into a new riddle.

ZERVIAH HOPE.

By Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.

PRELUDE.

IN the month of August, in the year 1878, the steamer *Mercy*, of the New York and Savannah line, cast anchor down the channel, off a little town in South Carolina which bore the name of Calhoun. It was not a regular part of her "run" for the *Mercy* to make a landing at this place. She had departed from her course by special permit to leave three passengers, two men and one woman, who had business of a grave nature in Calhoun.

A man, himself a passenger for Savannah, came upon deck as the steamship hove to, to inquire the reason of the delay. He was a short man, thin, with a nervous hand and neck. His eyes were black, his hair was black, and closely cut. He had an inscrutable mouth, and a forehead well-plowed rather by experience than years. He was not an

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old man. He was cleanly dressed in new, cheap clothes. He had been commented upon as a reticent passenger. He had no friends on board the *Mercy*. This was the first time upon the voyage that he had been observed to speak. He came forward and stood among the others, and abruptly said :

"What's this for ?"

He addressed the mate, who answered with a sidelong look, and none too cordially :

"We land passengers by the Company's order."

"Those three ?"

"Yes, the men and the lady."

"Who are they ?"

"Physicians from New York."

"Ah-h !" said the man, slowly, making a sighing noise between his teeth. "That means—that means—"

"Volunteers to the fever district," said the mate, shortly, "as you might have known before now. You're not of a sociable cast, I see."

"I have made no acquaintances," said the short passenger. "I know nothing of the news of the ship. Is the lady a nurse ?"

"She's a she-doctor. Doctors, the whole of 'em. There ain't a nurse aboard."

"Plenty to be found, I suppose, in this place you speak of ?"

"How should I know ?" replied the mate, with another sidelong look.

One of the physicians, it seemed, overheard this

last question and reply. It was the woman. She stepped forward without hesitation, and, regarding the short passenger closely, said :

"There are not nurses. This place is perishing. Savannah and the larger towns have been looked after first —as is natural and right," added the physician, in a business-like tone. She had a quick and clear-cut, but not ungentle voice.

The man nodded at her curtly, as he would to another man ; he made no answer ; then with a slight flush his eye returned to her dress and figure ; he lifted his hat and stood uncovered till she had passed and turned from him. His face, under the influence of this fluctuation of color, changed exceedingly, and improved in proportion as it changed.

"Who is that glum fellow, Doctor?"

One of the men physicians followed and asked the lady ; he spoke to her with an air of *camaraderie*, at once frank and deferential ; they had been class-mates at college for a course of lectures ; he had theories averse to the medical education of women in general, but this woman in particular, having outranked him at graduation, he had made up his mind to her as a marked exception to a wise rule, entitled to a candid fellow's respect. Besides, despite her diploma, Marian Dare was a lady —he knew the family.

"*Is* he glum, Dr. Frank?" replied Dr. Dare.

But the other young man stood silent. He never consulted with doctresses.

Dr. Dare went below for her luggage. A lonely dory, black of complexion and skittish of gait, had wandered out and hung in the shadow of the steamer, awaiting the passengers. The dory was manned by one negro, who sat with his oars crossed, perfectly silent.

There is a kind of terror for which we find that animals, as well as men, instinctively refrain from seeking expression. The face and figure of the negro boatman presented a dull form of this species of fear. Dr. Dare wondered if all the people in Calhoun would have that look. The negro regarded the *Mercy* and her passengers apathetically.

It was a hot day, and the water seemed to be blistering about the dory. So, too, the stretching sand of the shore, as one raised the eyes painfully against the direct noon-light, was as if it smoked. The low, gray palmetto leaves were curled and faint. Scanty spots of shade beneath sickly trees seemed to gasp upon the hot ground, like creatures that had thrown themselves down to get cool. The outlines of the town beyond had a certain horrible distinctness, as if of a sight that should but could not be veiled. Overhead, and clean to the flat horizon, flashed a sky of blue and blazing fire.

"Passengers for Calhoun!"

The three physicians descended into the dory. The other passengers—what there were of them—gathered to see the little group depart. Dr. Frank offered Dr. Dare a hand, which she accepted, like

a lady, not needing it in the least. She was a climber, with firm, lithe ankles. No one spoke, as these people got in with the negro, and prepared to drift down with the scorching tide. The woman looked from the steamer to the shore, once, and back again, northwards. The men did not look at all. There was an oppression in the scene which no one was ready to run the risk of increasing by the wrong word.

"Land me here, too," said a low voice, suddenly appearing. It was the glum passenger. No one noticed him, except, perhaps, the mate (looking on with the air of a man who would feel an individual grievance in anything this person would be likely to do) and the lady.

"There is room for you," said Dr. Dare. The man let himself into the boat at a light bound, and the negro rowed them away. The *Mercy*, heading outwards, seemed to shrug her shoulders, as if she had thrown them off. The strip of burning water between them and the town narrowed rapidly, and the group set their faces firmly landwards. Once, upon the little voyage, Dr. Frank took up an idle pair of oars, with some vaguely humane intent of helping the negro—he looked so.

"I wouldn't, Frank," said the other gentleman.

"Now, Remane—why, for instance?"

"I wouldn't begin by getting overheated."

No other word was spoken. They landed in silence. In silence, and somewhat weakly, the negro pulled the dory high upon the beach. The

four passengers stood for a moment upon the hot, white sands, moved toward one another, before they separated, by a blind sense of human fellowship. Even Remane found himself touching his hat. Dr. Frank asked Dr. Dare if he could serve her in any way ; but she thanked him, and, holding out her firm, white hand, said, "Good-bye."

This was, perhaps, the first moment when the consciousness of her sex had made itself oppressive to her since she ventured upon this undertaking. She would have minded presenting herself to the Relief Committee of Calhoun, accompanied by gentlemen upon whom she had no claim. She walked on alone, in her gray dress and white straw hat, with her luggage in her own sufficient hand.

The reticent passenger had fallen behind with the negro boatman, with whom he walked slowly, closing the line.

After a few moments, he advanced and hesitatingly joined the lady, beginning to say :

"May I ask you—"

"Ah," interrupted Dr. Dare, cordially, "it is you."

"Will you tell me, madam, the best way of going to work to offer myself as a fever nurse in this place ? I want the *best* way. I want real work."

"Yes, yes," she said, nodding ; "I knew you would do it."

"I came from the North for this purpose, but I meant to go on to Savannah."

"Yes, I know. This is better; they need *everything* in this place."

She looked toward the gasping little town through the relentless noon. Her merciful blue eyes filled, but the man's look followed with a dry, exultant light.

"There is no porter," he said, abruptly, glancing at her heavy bag and shawl-strap. "Would you permit me to help you?"

"Oh, thank you!" replied Dr. Dare, heartily, relinquishing her burden.

Plainly, this poor fellow was not a gentleman. The lady could afford to be kind to him.

"I know nothing how we shall find it," she chatted, affably, "but I go to work to-night. I presume I shall need nurses before morning. I'll have your address."

She took from her gray sacque pocket a physician's note-book, and stood, pencil in hand.

"My name," he said, "is Hope—Zerviah Hope."

She wrote without comment, walking as she wrote; he made no other attempt to converse with her. The two physicians followed, exchanging now and then a subdued word. The negro dragged himself wearily over the scorching sand, and thus the little procession of pity entered the town of Calhoun.

My story does not deal with love or ladies. I have to relate no tender passages between the fever-physicians, volunteers from New York, for

the afflicted region of Calhoun. Dr. Marian Dare came South to do a brave work, and I have no doubt she did it bravely, as a woman should. She came in pursuit of science, and I have no doubt she found it, as a woman will. Our chief interest in her at this time lies in the fact that certain missing fragments in the history of the person known as Zerviah Hope we owe to her. She hovers over the tale with a distant and beautiful influence, pervading as womanly compassion and alert as a woman's eye.

I have nothing further to say about the story before I tell it, except that it is true.

That night, after the physicians had gone about their business, Zerviah Hope wandered, a little forlornly, through the wretched town. Scip, the negro boatman, found him a corner to spend the night. It was a passable place, but Hope could not sleep; he had already seen too much. His soul was parched with the thirst of sympathy. He walked his hot attic till the dawn came. As it grew brighter he grew calmer; and, when the unkindly sun burst burning upon the land, he knelt by his window and looked over the doomed town, and watched the dead-carts slinking away toward the everglades in the splendid color of the sky and air, and thought his own thoughts in his own way about this which he had come to do. We should not suppose that they were remarkable thoughts; he had not the look of a remarkable man Yet, as

he knelt there,—a sleepless, haggard figure blotted against the sunrise, with folded hands and moving lips,—an artist, with a high type of imagination and capable of spiritual discernment, would have found in him a design for a lofty subject, to which perhaps he would have given the name of "Consecration" rather than of "Renunciation," or of "Exultance" rather than of "Dread."

A common observer would have simply said: "I should not have taken him for a praying man."

He was still upon his knees when Dr. Dare's order came, "Nurse wanted for a bad case!" and he went from his prayer to his first patient. The day was already deep, and a reflection, not of the sunrise, moved with him as light moves.

Doctor Dare, in her gray dress, herself a little pale, met him with keen eyes. She said:

"It is a *very* bad case. An old man—much neglected. No one will go. Are you willing?"

The nurse answered:

"I am glad."

She watched him as he walked away—a plain, clean, common man, with unheroic carriage. The physician's fine eyes fired.

To Doctor Frank, who had happened in, she said:

"He will do the work of ten."

> "His strength was as the strength of ten,
> Because his heart was pure,"

quoted the young man, laughing lightly. "I

don't know that I should have thought it, in this case. You've taken a fancy to the fellow."

"I always respect an unmixed motive when I see it," she replied, shortly. "But I've been in practice too long to take sudden fancies. There is no profession like ours, Doctor, for putting the sympathies under double picket guard."

She stiffened a little in her manner. She did not like to be thought an over-enthusiastic woman—womanish, unused to the world.

The weather, soon after the arrival of the *Mercy*, took a terrible mood, and a prolonged drought settled upon Calhoun. The days dawned lurid and long. The nights fell dewless and deadly. Fatal and beautiful colors lurked in the swamps, and in the sifting dust, fine and hard, blown by siroccos across the glare of noon, like sands on the shores of the Lake of Fire. The pestilence walked in darkness, and the destruction wasted at midday. Men died, in that little town of a few thousand souls, at the rate of a score a day—black and white, poor and rich, clean and foul, saint and sinner. The quarantine laws tightened. Vessels fled by the harbor mouth under full sail, and melted like helpless compassion upon the fiery horizon. Trains upon the Shore Line shot through and thundered past the station; they crowded on steam; the fireman and his stoker averted their faces as they whirled by. The world turned her back upon Calhoun, and the dying town was shut in with her dead. Only, at long intervals, the

Mercy, casting anchor far down the channel, sent up by Scip, the weak, black boatman, the signs of human fellowship—food, physician, purse, medicine—that spoke from the heart of the North to the heart of the South, and upheld her in those well-remembered days.

Zerviah Hope, volunteer nurse, became quickly enough a marked man in Calhoun. He more than verified Doctor Dare's prognosis. Where the deadliest work was to be done, this man, it was observed, asked to be sent. Where no one else would go, he went. What no one else would do, he did. He sought the neglected, and the negroes. He braved the unclean, and the unburied. With the readiness of all incisive character acting on emergencies, he stamped himself upon the place and time. He went to his task as the soldier goes to the front under raking fire, with gleaming eyes and iron muscles. The fever of the fight was on him. He seemed to wrestle with disease for his patients, and to trample death beneath his feet. He glowed over his cures with a positive physical dilation, and writhed over his dead as if he had killed them. He seemed built of endurance more than mortal. It was not known when he slept, scarcely if he ate. His weariness sat upon him like a halo. He grew thin, refined, radiant. In short, he presented an example of that rare spectacle which never fails to command spectators —a common man possessed by an uncommon enthusiasm.

What passed with him at this time in that undiscovered sea which we call a man's inner life, it would not be easy to assert. So far as we can judge, all the currents of his nature had swelled into the great, pulsing tide of self-surrender, which swept him along. Weakness, wrong, memory, regret, fear, grief, pleasure, hope,—all the little channels of personal life,—ran dry. He was that most blessed of human creatures, a man without a past and without a future, and living in a present nobler than the one could have been or the other could become. He continued to be a silent man, speaking little, excepting to his patients, and now and then, very gently, to the lady, Dr. Dare. He was always pliable to the influence of a woman's voice or to womanly manner. He had, in the presence of women, the quick responsiveness and sudden change of color and sensitiveness of intonation which bespeak the man whose highest graces and lowest faults are likely to be owing to feminine power.

This was a quality which gave him remarkable success as a nurse. He was found to be infinitely tender, and of fine, brave patience. It was found that he shrank from no task because it was too small, as he had shrunk from no danger because it was too great. He became a favorite with the sick and with physicians. The convalescent clung to him, the dying heard of him and sent for him, the Relief Committee leaned upon him, as in such crises the leader leans upon the led. By degrees,

he became greatly trusted in Calhoun ; this is to say, that he became greatly loved.

I have been told that, to this day, many people personally unknown to him, whose fate it was to be imprisoned in that beleaguered town at that time, and who were familiar with the nervous figure and plain, intense countenance of the Northern nurse, as he passed, terrible day after terrible day, to his post, cannot hear of him, even now, without that suffusion of look by which we hold back tears ; and that, when his name took on, as it did, a more than local reputation, they were unable to speak it because of choking voices. I have often wished that he knew this.

It was the custom in Calhoun to pay the nurses at short, stated intervals,—I think once a week, on Saturday nights. The first time that Hope was summoned to receive his wages, he evinced marked emotion, too genuine not to be one of surprise and repugnance.

"I had not thought,—" he began, and stood, coloring violently.

"You earn your five dollars a day, if anybody in Calhoun does," urged the official, with kindly brusqueness.

"It is not right ; I do not wish to take the money," said the nurse, with agitation. "I do not wish to be paid for—saving—human life. I did not come to the fever district to make money ; I came to save life—*to save life!*" he added, in a quick whisper. He had not slept for four nights,

and seemed, they noticed, more than usually nervous in his manner.

"The money is yours," insisted the treasurer.

"Very well," said Hope, after a long silence; and no more was said about it. He took his wages and walked away up the street, absorbed in thought.

One morning, he went to his lodgings to seek a little rest. It was about six o'clock, and people were already moving in the hot, thirsty streets. The apothecaries' doors were open, and their clerks were astir. The physicians drove or walked hastily, with the haggard look of men whose days and nights are too short for their work, and whose hope, and heart as well, have grown almost too small. Zerviah noticed those young Northern fellows among them, Frank and Remane, and saw how they had aged since they came South,—brave boys, both of them, and had done a man's brave deed. Through her office window, as he walked past, he caught a glimpse of Dr. Dare's gray dress and blonde, womanly head of abundant hair. She was mixing medicines, and patients stood waiting. She looked up and nodded as he went by; she was too busy to smile. At the door of the Relief Committee, gaunt groups hung, clamoring. At the telegraph office, knots of men and women gathered, duly inspiring the heroic young operator,—a slight girl,—who had not left her post for now many days and nights. Her chief had the fever last week,—was taken at the wires,

—lived to get home. She was the only person alive in the town who knew how to communicate with the outer world. She had begun to teach a little brother of hers the Morse alphabet,—"That somebody may know, Bobby, if I—can't come some day." She, too, knew Zerviah Hope, and looked up; but her pretty face was clouded with the awful shadow of her own responsibility.

"We all have about as much as we can bear," thought Zerviah, as he went by. His own burden was lightened a little that morning, and he was going home to get a real rest. He had just saved his last patient—the doctor gave him up. It was a young man, the father of five very little children, and their mother had died the week before. The nurse had looked at the orphans, and said: "*He's got to live.*" This man had blessed him this morning, and called the love of heaven on his head and its tender mercy on his whole long life. Zerviah walked with quick step. He lifted his head, with its short, black, coarse hair. His eyes, staring for sleep, flashed, fed with a food the body knows not of. He felt almost happy, as he turned to climb the stairs that led to the attic shelter where he had knelt and watched the dawn come on that first day, and given himself to God and to the dying of Calhoun. He had always kept that attic, partly because he had made that prayer there. He thought it helped him to make others since. He had not always been a man who prayed. The habit was new, and required culture. He had

guarded it rigidly since he came South, as he had his diet and regimen of bathing, air, and other physical needs.

On this morning that I speak of, standing with his almost happy face and lifted head, with his foot upon the stairs, he turned, for no reason that he could have given, and looked over his shoulder. A man behind him, stepping softly, stopped, changed color, and crossed the street.

"I am followed," said the nurse.

He spoke aloud, but there was no one to hear him. A visible change came over his face. He stood uncertain for a moment; then shut the door and crawled upstairs. At intervals he stopped on the stairs to rest, and sat with his head in his hands, thinking. By and by he reached his room, and threw himself heavily upon his bed. All the radiance had departed from his tired face, as if a fog had crept over it. He hid it in his long, thin, humane hands, and lay there for a little while. He was perplexed—not surprised. He was not shocked—only disappointed. Dully he wished that he could get five minutes' nap; but he could not sleep. Not knowing what else to do, he got upon his knees presently, in that place by the window he liked to pray in, and said aloud:

"Lord, I didn't expect it; I wasn't ready. I should like to sleep long enough to decide what to do."

After this, he went back to bed and lay still again, and in a little while he truly slept. Not

long ; but to those who perish for rest, a moment of unconsciousness may do the work of a cup of water to one perishing of thirst. He started, strengthened, with lines of decision forming about his mouth and chin ; and, having bathed and cleanly dressed, went out.

He went out beyond the town to the hut where Scip the boatman lived. Scip was at home. He lived quite alone. His father, his mother and four brothers had died of the plague since June. He started when he saw Hope, and his habitual look of fear deepened to a craven terror ; he would rather have had the yellow fever than to have seen the Northern nurse just then. But Zerviah sat down by him on the hot sand, beside a rather ghastly palmetto that grew there, and spoke to him very gently. He said :

" The *Mercy* came in last night, Scip.—I know. And you rowed down for the supplies. You heard something about me on board the *Mercy*. Tell me, Scip."

" He's a durn fool," said Scip, with a dull show of passion.

" Who is a durn fool ?"

" That dem mate."

" So it was the mate ? Yes. What did he say, Scip ?"

" I never done believe it," urged Scip, with an air of suddenly recollected virtue.

" But you told of it, Scip."

"I never told nobody but Jupiter, the durn fool!" persisted Scip.

"Who is Jupiter?"

"Doctor Remane's Jupiter, him that holds his hoss, that he brung up from the fever. He said he wouldn't tell. I never done believe it, *never!*"

"It seems to me, Scip," said Zerviah, in a low, kind voice, "that I wouldn't have told if I'd been you. But never mind."

"I never done mean to hurt you!" cried Scip, following him into the road. "Jupiter the durn, he said he'd never tell. I never told nobody else."

"You have told the whole town," said Zerviah Hope, patiently. "I'm sorry, but never mind."

He stood for a moment looking across the stark palmetto, over the dusty stretch of road, across the glare, to the town. His eyes blinded and filled.

"It wouldn't have been a great while," he said. "I wish you hadn't, Scip, but never mind!"

He shook the negro gently off, as if he had been a child. There was nothing more to say. He would go back to his work. As he walked along, he suddenly said to himself:

"She did not smile this morning! Nor the lady at the telegraph office, either. Nor—a good many other folks. I remember now. . . . Lord!" he added aloud, thought breaking into one of his half-unconscious prayers, which had the more pathos because it began with the rude abruptness

of an apparent oath,—"Lord! what in the name of heaven am I going to do about it?"

Now, as he was coming into the little city, with bowed head and broken face, he met Doctor Dare. She was riding on her rounds upon a patient, Southern tackey, and she was riding fast. But she reined up and confronted him.

"Mr. Hope! There is a hateful rumor brought from New York about you. I am going to tell you immediately. It is said—"

"Wait a minute!" he pleaded, holding out both hands. "Now. Go on."

"It is said that you are an escaped convict," continued the lady, distinctly.

"It is false!" cried the nurse, in a ringing voice.

The doctor regarded him for a moment.

"I may be wrong. Perhaps it was not so bad. I was in a cruel hurry, and so was Doctor Frank. Perhaps they said a discharged convict."

"What else?" asked Zerviah, lifting his eyes to hers.

"They said you were just out of a seven years' imprisonment for manslaughter. They said you killed a man—for jealousy, I believe; something about a woman."

"What else?" repeated the nurse, steadily.

"I told them I *did not believe one word of it!*" cried Marian Dare.

"Thank you, madam," said Zerviah Hope, after a scarcely perceptible pause; "but it is true."

He drew one fierce breath.

"She was beautiful," he said. "I loved her; he ruined her; I stabbed him!"

He had grown painfully pale. He wanted to go on speaking to this woman, not to defend or excuse himself, not to say anything weak or wrong, only to make her understand that he did not want to excuse himself; in some way, just because she *was* a woman, to make her feel that he was man enough to bear the burden of his deed. He wanted to cry out to her, "You are a woman! Oh, be gentle, and understand how sorry a man can be for a deadly sin!" but his lips were parched. He moved them dryly; he could not talk.

She was silent at first. She was a prudent woman; she thought before she spoke.

"Poor fellow!" she said, suddenly. Her clear blue eyes overflowed. She held out her hand, lifted his, wrung it, dropped it, and softly added, "Well, never mind!" much as if he had been a child or a patient,—much as he himself had said, "Never mind!" to Scip.

Then Zerviah Hope broke down.

"I haven't got a murderer's heart!" he cried. "It has been taken away from me. I ain't so bad —*now*. I meant to be—I wanted to do—"

"Hush!" she said. "You have, and you shall. God is fair."

"Yes," said the penitent convict, in a dull voice, "God is fair, and so he let 'em tell of me. I've got no fault to find with *Him*. So nigh as I can

understand Almighty God, He means well. . . . I guess He'll pull me through some way. . . . But I wish Scip hadn't told just now. I can't *help* being sorry. It wasn't that I wanted to cheat, but"—he choked—"*the sick folks used to like me.* Now, do you think I'd ought to go on nursing, Doctor? Do you think I'd ought to stop?"

"You are already an hour late," replied the woman of science, in her usual business-like voice. "Your substitute will be sleepy and restless; that affects the patient. Go back to your work as fast as you can. Ask me no more foolish questions."

She drew her veil; there was unprofessional moisture on her long, feminine lashes. She held out her hearty hand-grasp to him, touched the tackey, and galloped away.

"She is a good woman," said Zerviah, half aloud, looking down at his cold fingers. "She touched me, and she knew! Lord, I should like to have you bless her!"

He looked after her. She sat her horse finely; her gray veil drifted in the hot wind. His sensitive color came. He watched her as if he had known that he should never see her again on earth.

A ruined character may be as callous as a paralyzed limb. A ruined and repentant one is in itself an independent system of sensitive and tortured nerves.

Zerviah Hope returned to his work, shrinking under the foreknowledge of his fate. He felt as if he knew what kind of people would remind him

that they had become acquainted with his history, and what ways they would select to do it.

He was not taken by surprise when men who had lifted their hats to the popular nurse last week, passed him on the street to-day with a cold nod or curious stare. When women who had reverenced the self-sacrifice and gentleness of his life as only women do or can reverence the quality of tenderness in a man, shrank from him as if he were something infectious, like the plague,—he knew it was just, though he felt it hard.

His patients heard of what had happened, sometimes, and indicated a feeling of recoil. That was the worst. One said :

"I am sorry to hear you are not the man we thought you," and died in his arms that night.

Zerviah remembered that these things must be. He reasoned with himself. He went into his attic, and prayed it all over. He said :

"Lord, I can't expect to be treated as if I'd never been in prison. I'm sorry I mind it so. Perhaps I'd ought not to. I'll try not to care too much."

More than once he was sure of being followed again, suspiciously or curiously. It occurred to him at last that this was most likely to happen on pay-days. That puzzled him. But when he turned, it was usually some idler, and the fellow shrank and took to his heels, as if the nurse had the fever.

In point of fact, even in that death-stricken

town, to be alive was to be as able to gossip as well people, and rumor, wearied of the monotonous fever symptom, found a diverting zest in this shattered reputation.

Zerviah Hope was very much talked about in Calhoun; so much, that the Relief Committee heard, questioned, and experienced official anxiety. It seemed a mistake to lose so valuable a man. It seemed a severity to disturb so noble a career. Yet who knew what sinister countenance the murderer might be capable of shielding beneath his mask of pity? The official mind was perplexed. Was it humane to trust the lives of our perishing citizens to the ministrations of a felon who had so skillfully deceived the most intelligent guardians of the public weal? There was, in particular, a chairman of a sub-committee (on the water supply) who was burdened with uneasiness.

"It's clear enough what brought *him* to Calhoun," said this man. "What do you suppose the fellow does with his five dollars a day?"

The Committee on the Water Supply promptly divided into a Sub-Vigilance, and to the Sub-Vigilance Committee Zerviah Hope's case was referred. The result was, that he was followed on pay-day.

One Saturday night, just as the red-hot sun was going down, the sub-committee returned to the Relief Office in a state of high official excitement, and reported to the chief as follows:

"We've done it. We've got him. We've found

out what the fellow does with his money. He puts it—"

"Well?" for the sub-committee hesitated.

"Into the relief contribution-boxes on the corners of the street."

"*What!*"

"Every dollar. We stood and watched him count it out—his week's wages. Every mortal cent that Yankee's turned over to the fund for the sufferers. He never kept back a red. He poured it all in."

"Follow him next week. Report again."

They followed, and reported still again. They consulted, and accepted the astounding truth. The murderer, the convict, the miserable, the mystery, Zerviah Hope,—volunteer nurse, poor, friendless, discharged from Sing Sing, was proved to have surrendered to the public charities of Calhoun, every dollar which he had earned in the service of her sick and dying.

The Committee on the Water Supply, and the Sub-Vigilance Committee stood, much depressed, before their superior officer. He, being a just man, flushed red with a noble rage.

"Where is he? Where is Zerviah Hope? The man should be sent for. He should receive the thanks of the committee. He should receive the acknowledgments of the city. And we've set on him like detectives! hunted him down! Zounds! The city is disgraced. Find him for me!"

"We have already done our best," replied the

sub-committee, sadly. "We have searched for the man. He cannot be found."

"Where is the woman-doctor?" persisted the excited chief. "She recommended the fellow. She'd be apt to know. Can't some of you find her?"

At this moment, young Dr. Frank looked haggardly into the Relief Office.

"I am taking her cases," he said. "She is down with the fever."

It was the morning after his last pay-day—Sunday morning, the first in October; a dry, deadly, glittering day. Zerviah had been to his attic to rest and bathe; he had been there some hours since sunrise, in the old place by the window, and watched the red sun kindle, and watched the dead-carts slink away into the color, and kneeled and prayed for frost. Now, being strengthened in mind and spirit, he was descending to his Sabbath's work, when a message met him at the door. The messenger was a negro boy, who thrust a slip of paper into his hand, and, seeming to be seized with superstitious fright, ran rapidly up the street and disappeared.

The message was a triumphal result of the education of the freedmen's evening school, and succinctly said:

"ive Gut IT. Nobuddy Wunt Nuss me. Norr no Docter nEther.

"P. S. Joopiter the Durn hee sed he'd kerry This i dont Serpose youd kum. SCIP."

The sun went down that night as red as it had risen. There were no clouds. There was no wind. There was no frost. The hot dust curdled in the shadow that coiled beneath the stark palmetto. That palmetto always looked like a corpse, though there was life in it yet. Zerviah came to the door of Scip's hovel for air, and looked at the thing. It seemed like something that ought to be buried. There were no other trees. The everglades were miles away. The sand and the scant, starved grass stretched all around. Scip's hut stood quite by itself. No one passed by. Often no one passed for a week, or even more. Zerviah looked from the door of the hut to the little city. The red light lay between him and it, like a great pool. He felt less lonely to see the town, and the smoke now and then from chimneys. He thought how many people loved and cared for one another in the suffering place. He thought how much love and care suffering gave birth to, in human hearts. He began to think a little of his own suffering; then Scip called him, sobbing wretchedly. Scip was very sick. Hope had sent for Dr. Dare. She had not come. Scip was too sick to be left. The nurse found his duty with the negro. Scip was growing worse.

By and by, when the patient could be left for a moment again, Zerviah came to the air once more. He drew in great breaths of the now cooler night. The red pool was gone. All the world was filled with the fatal beauty of the purple colors that he

had learned to know so well. The swamps seemed to be asleep, and to exhale in the slow, regular pulsations of sleep. In the town, lamps were lighted. From a hundred windows, fair, fine sparks shone like stars as the nurse looked over. There, a hundred watchers tended their sick or dead, or their healing, dearly loved, and guarded ones. Dying eyes looked their last at eyes that would have died to save them; strengthening hands clasped hands that had girded them with the iron of love's tenderness, through the valley of the shadow, and up the heights of life and light. Over there, in some happy home, tremulous lips that the plague had parted met to-night in their first kiss of thanksgiving.

Zerviah thought of these things. He had never felt so lonely before. It seemed a hard place for a man to die in. Poor Scip!

Zerviah clasped his thin hands and looked up at the purple sky.

"Lord," he said, "it is my duty. I came South to do my duty. Because he told of me, had I ought to turn against him? It is a lonesome place; he's got it hard, but I'll stand by him. . . . Lord!"—his worn face became suddenly suffused, and flashed, transfigured, as he lifted it—"Lord God Almighty! You stood by me! *I* couldn't have been a pleasant fellow to look after. You stood by *me* in my scrape! I hadn't treated *You* any too well. . . . You needn't be afraid I'll leave the creetur."

He went back into the hut. Scip called, and he hurried in. The nurse and the plague, like two living combatants, met in the miserable place and battled for the negro.

The white Southern stars blazed out. How clean they looked! Zerviah could see them through the window, where the wooden shutter had flapped back. They looked well and wholesome—holy, he thought. He remembered to have heard some one say, at a Sunday meeting he happened into once, years ago, that the word holiness meant health. He wondered what it would be like, to be holy. He wondered what kinds of people would be holy people, say, after a man was dead. Women, he thought,—good women, and honest men who had never done a deadly deed.

He occupied his thoughts in this way. He looked often from the cold stars to the warm lights throbbing in the town. They were both company to him. He began to feel less alone. There was a special service called somewhere in the city that night, to read the prayers for the sick and dying. The wind rose feebly, and bore the sound of the church-bells to the hut. There was a great deal of company, too, in the bells. He remembered that it was Sunday night.

It was Monday, but no one came. It was Tuesday, but the nurse and the plague still battled alone together over the negro. Zerviah's stock of remedies was as ample as his skill. He had

thought he should save Scip. He worked without sleep, and the food was not clean. He lavished himself like a lover over this black boatman; he leaned like a mother over this man who had betrayed him.

But on Tuesday night, a little before midnight, Scip rose, struggling on his wretched bed, and held up his hands and cried out:

"Mr. Hope! Mr. Hope! I never done mean to harm ye!"

"You have not harmed me," said Zerviah, solemnly. "Nobody ever harmed me but myself. Don't mind me, Scip."

Scip put up his feeble hand; Zerviah took it; Scip spoke no more. The nurse held the negro's hand a long time; the lamp went out; they sat on in the dark. Through the flapping wooden shutter the stars looked in.

Suddenly, Zerviah perceived that Scip's hand was quite cold.

He carried him out by starlight, and buried him under the palmetto. It was hard work digging alone. He could not make a very deep grave, and he had no coffin. When the earth was stamped down, he felt extremely weary and weak. He fell down beside his shovel and pick to rest, and lay there in the night till he felt stronger. It was damp and dark. Shadows like clouds hung over the distant outline of the swamp.

The Sunday bells in the town had ceased

There were no sounds but the cries of a few lonely birds and wild creatures of the night, whose names he did not know. This little fact added to his sense of solitude.

He thought at first he would get up and walk back to the city in the dark. An intense and passionate longing seized him to be among living men. He took a few steps down the road. The unwholesome dust blew up through the dark against his face. He found himself so tired that he concluded to go back to the hut. He would sleep, and start in the morning with the break of the dawn. He should be glad to see the faces of his kind again, even though the stir of welcome and the light of trust were gone out of them for him. They lived, they breathed, they spoke. He was tired of death and solitude.

He groped back into the hut. The oil was low, and he could not relight the lamp. He threw himself in the dark upon his bed.

He slept until late in the morning, heavily. When he waked, the birds were shrill in the hot air, and the sun glared in.

"I will go now," he said, aloud. "I am glad I can go," and crept to his feet.

He took two steps—staggered—and fell back. He lay for some moments, stricken more with astonishment than alarm. His first words were:

"Lord God! After all—after all I've gone through—Lord God Almighty, if You'll believe it—I've *got it!*"

This was on Wednesday morning. Night fell, but no one came. Thursday—but outside the hut no step stirred the parched, white dust. Friday—Saturday—no voice but his own moaning broke upon the sick man's straining ear.

His professional experience gave him an excruciating foresight of his symptoms, and their result presented itself to him with horrible distinctness. As one by one he passed through the familiar conditions whose phases he had watched in other men a hundred times, he would have given his life for a temporary ignorance. His trained imagination had little mercy on him. He weighed his chances, and watched his fate with the sad exactness of knowledge.

As the days passed, and no one came to him, he was aware of not being able to reason with himself clearly about his solitude. Growing weak, he remembered the averted faces of the people for whom he had labored, and whom he had loved. In the stress of his pain their estranged eyes gazed at him. He felt that he was deserted because he was distrusted. Patient as he was, this seemed hard.

"They did not care enough for me to miss me," he said, aloud, gently. "I suppose I was not worth it. I had been in prison. I was a wicked man. I must not blame them."

And again:

"They would have come if they had known. They would not have let me die alone. I don't

think *she* would have done that. I wonder where she is? Nobody has missed me—that is all. I must not mind."

Growing weaker, he thought less and prayed more. He prayed, at last, almost all his time. When he did not pray, he slept. When he could not sleep, he prayed. He addressed God with that sublime familiarity of his, which fell from his lips with no more irreverence than the kiss of a child falling upon its mother's hand or neck.

The murderer, the felon, the outcast, talked with the Almighty Holiness, as a man talketh with his friends. The deserted, distrusted, dying creature believed himself to be trusted by the Being who had bestowed on him the awful gift of life.

"Lord," he said, softly, "I guess I can bear it. I'd like to see somebody—but I'll make out to get along. . . . Lord! I'm pretty weak. I know all about these spasms. You get delirious next thing, you know. Then you either get better or you never do. It'll be decided by Sunday night. Lord! Dear Lord!" he added, with a tender pause, "don't *You* forget me! I hope *You'll* miss me enough to hunt me up."

It grew dark early on Saturday night. The sun sank under a thin, deceptive web of cloud. The shadow beneath the palmetto grew long over Scip's fresh grave. The stars were dim and few. The wind rose, and the lights in the city, where watchers wept over their sick, trembled on the frail

breeze, and seemed to be multiplied, like objects seen through tears.

Through the wooden shutter, Zerviah could see the lights, and the lonely palmetto, and the grave. He could see those few cold stars.

He thought, while his thoughts remained his own, most tenderly and longingly of those for whom he had given his life. He remembered how many keen cares of their own they had to carry, how many ghastly deeds and sights to do and bear. It was not strange that he should not be missed. Who was he?—a disgraced, unfamiliar man, among their kin and neighborhood. Why should they think of him? he said.

Yet he was glad that he could remember them. He wished his living or his dying could help them any. Things that his patients had said to him, looks that healing eyes had turned on him, little signs of human love and leaning, came back to him as he lay there, and stood around his bed, like people, in the dark hut.

"*They loved me*," he said: "Lord, as true as I'm alive, they did! I'm glad I lived long enough to save life, *to save life!* I'm much obliged to You for that! I wish there was something else I could do for them. . . . Lord! I'd be willing to die if it would help them any. If I thought I could do anything that way, toward sending them a frost—

"No," he added, "that ain't reasonable. A frost and a human life ain't convertible coin. He don't do unreasonable things. May be I've lost

my head already. But I'd be glad to. That's all. I suppose I can *ask* You for a frost. *That's* reason.

"Lord God of earth and heaven! that made the South and North, the pestilence and destruction, the sick and well, the living and the dead, have mercy on us miserable sinners! Have mercy on the folks that pray to You, and on the folks that don't! Remember the old graves, and the new ones, and the graves that are to be opened if this hellish heat goes on, and send us a blessed frost, O Lord, *as an act of humanity!* And if that ain't the way to speak to You, remember I haven't been a praying man long enough to learn the language very well,—and that I'm pretty sick,—but that I would be glad to die—to give them—a great, white, holy frost. Lord, a frost! Lord, a cool, white, clean frost, for these poor devils that have borne so much!"

At midnight of that Saturday he dozed and dreamed. He dreamed of what he had thought while Scip was sick: of what it was like, to be holy; and, sadly waking, thought of holy people —good women and honest men, who had never done a deadly deed.

"I cannot be holy," thought Zerviah Hope; "but I can pray for frost." So he tried to pray for frost. But by that time he had grown confused, and his will wandered pitifully, and he saw strange sights in the little hut. It was as if he were not alone. Yet no one had come in. *She* could not come at midnight. Strange — how

strange! Who was that who walked about the hut? Who stood and looked at him? Who leaned to him? Who brooded over him? Who put arms beneath him? Who looked at him, as those look who love the sick too much to shrink from them?

"I don't know You," said Zerviah, in a distinct voice. Presently he smiled. "Yes, I guess I do. I see now. I'm not used to You. I never saw You before. You are Him I've heered about—God's Son! God's Son, You've taken a great deal of trouble to come here after me. Nobody else came. You're the only one that has remembered me. You're very good to me.

". . . Yes, I remember. They made a prisoner of *You*. Why, yes! They deserted *You*. They let *You* die by Yourself. What did You do it for? I don't know much about theology. I am not an educated man. I never prayed till I come South. . . . I forget — *What did You do it for?*"

A profound and solemn silence replied.

"Well," said the sick man, breaking it in a satisfied tone, as if he had been answered, "I wasn't worth it . . . but I'm glad You came. I wish they had a frost, poor things! *You* won't go away? Well, I'm glad. Poor things! Poor things! I'll take Your hand, if You've no objections."

After a little time, he added, in a tone of unutterable tenderness and content:

"*Dear* Lord!" and said no more.

It was a quiet night. The stars rode on as if there were no task but the tasks of stars in all the

universe, and no sorrow keener than their sorrow, and no care other than their motion and their shining. The web of cloud floated like exhaling breath between them and the earth. It grew cooler before the dawn. The leaves of the palmetto over Scip's grave seemed to uncurl, and grow lax, and soften. The dust still flew heavily, but the wind rose.

The Sunday-bells rang peacefully. The sick heard them, and the convalescent and the well. The dying listened to them before they left. On the faces of the dead, too, there came the look of those who hear.

The bells tolled, too, that Sunday. They tolled almost all the afternoon. The young Northerner, Dr. Remane, was gone,—a reticent, brave young man,—and the heroic telegraph operator. Saturday night they buried her. Sunday, "Bobby" took her place at the wires, and spelled out, with shaking fingers, the cries of Calhoun to the wide, well world.

By sunset, all the bells had done ringing and done tolling. There was a clear sky, with cool colors. It seemed almost cold about Scip's hut. The palmetto lifted its faint head. The dust slept. It was not yet dark when a little party from the city rode up, searching for the dreary place. They had ridden fast. Dr. Frank was with them, and the lady, Marian Dare. She rode at their head. She hurried nervously on. She was pale, and still weak. The chairman of the Relief Committee was with her, and the sub-committee and others.

Dr. Dare pushed on through the swinging door

of the hut. She entered alone. They saw the backward motion of her gray-sleeved wrist, and came no farther, but removed their hats and stood. She knelt beside the bed, and put her hand upon his eyes. God is good, after all. Let us hope that they knew her before they closed.

She came out, and tried to tell about it, but broke down, and sobbed before them all.

"It's a martyr's death," said the chief, and added solemnly, "Let us pray."

He knelt, and the others with him, between the buried negro and the unburied nurse, and thanked God for the knowledge and the recollection of the holy life which this man had lived among them in their hour of need.

They buried him, as they must, and hurried homeward to their living, comforting one another for his memory as they could.

As for him, he rested, after her hand had fallen on his eyes. He who had known so deeply the starvation of sleeplessness, slept well that night.

In the morning, when they all awoke, these of the sorrowing city here, and those of the happy city yonder; when they took up life again with its returning sunrise,—the sick and the well, the free and the fettered, the living and the dead,—the frost lay, cool, white, blessed, on his grave.

THE LIFE-MAGNET.

By Alvey A. Adee.

THERE was something about the wholesome sleepiness of Freiberg, in Saxony, that fitted well with the lazy nature of Ronald Wyde. So, having run down there to spend a day or two among the students and the mines, and taking a liking to the quaint, unmodernized town, he bodily changed his plans of autumn-travel, gave up a cherished scheme of Russian vagabondage, had his baggage sent from Dresden, and made ready to settle down and drowse away three or four months in idleness and not over-arduous study. And this move of his led to the happening of a very strange and seemingly unreal event in his life.

Ronald Wyde was then about twenty-five or six years old, rather above the medium height, with thick blue-black hair that he had an artist-trick of allowing to ripple down to his neck, dark hazel

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eyes that were almost too deeply recessed in their bony orbits, and a troublesome growth of beard that, close-shaven as he always was, showed in strong blue outline through the thin and rather sallow skin. His address was singularly pleasing, and his wide experience of life, taught him by years of varied travel, made him a good deal of a cosmopolitan in his views and ways, which caused him to be looked upon as a not over-safe companion for young men of his own age or under.

Having made up his mind to winter in Freiberg, his first step was to quit the little hotel, with its mouldy stone-vaulted entrance and its columned dining-room, under whose full-centered arches close beery and smoky fumes lingered persistently, and seek quieter student-lodgings in the heart of the town. His choice was mainly influenced by a thin-railed balcony, twined through and through by the shoots of a vigorous Virginia creeper, that flamed and flickered in the breezy October sunsets in strong relief against the curtains that drifted whitely out and in through the open window. So, with the steady-going and hale old Frau Spritzkrapfen he took up his quarters, fully persuading himself that he did so for the sake of the stray home-breaths that seemed to stir the scarlet vine-leaves more gently for him, and ignoring pretty Lottchen's great, earnest Saxon eyes as best he could.

A sunny morning followed his removal to Frau Spritzkrapfen's tidy home. There had been a

slight rain in the early night, and the footways were yet bright and moist in patches that the slanting morning rays were slowly coaxing away. Ronald Wyde, having set his favorite books handily on the dimity-draped table, which comprised for him the process of getting to rights, and having given more than one glance of amused wonderment at the naïve blue-and-white scriptural tiles that cased his cumbrous four-story earthenware stove, and smiled lazily at poor Adam's obvious and sudden indigestion, even while the uneaten half-apple remained in his guilty hand, he stepped out on his balcony, leaned his elbows among the crimson leaves, and took in the healthful morning air in great draughts. It was a Sunday ; the bells of the gray minster hard by were iterating their clanging calls to the simple townsfolk to come and be droned to in sleepy German gutturals from the carved, pillar-hung pulpit inside. Looking down, he saw thick-ankled women cluttering past in loose wooden-soled shoes, and dumpy girls with tow-braids primly dangling to their hips, convoying sturdy Dutch-built luggers of younger brothers up the easy slope that led to the church and the bells. Presently Frau Spritzkrapfen and dainty Lottchen, rosy with soap and health, slipped through the doorway beneath him out into the little church-bound throng, and, as they disappeared, left the house and street somehow unaccountably alone. Feeling this, Ronald Wyde determined on a stroll.

Something in the Sabbath stillness around him led Ronald away from the swift clang and throbbing hum of the bells and in the direction of the old cemetery. Passing through the clumsy tower-gate that lifts its grimy bulk sullenly, like a huge head-stone over the grave of a dead time of feudalism, he reached the burial-ground and entered the quiet enclosure. The usual touching reverence of the Germans for their dead was strikingly manifest around him. The humbler mounds, walled up with rough stones a foot or two above the pathway level, carried on their crests little gardens of gay and inexpensive plants; while on the tall wooden crosses at their head hung yellow wreaths, half hiding the hopeful legend, "Wiedersehen." The more pretentious slabs bore vases filled with fresh flowers; while in the grate-barred vaults, that skirted the ground like the arches of a cloister, lay rusty heaps of long-since mouldered bloom, topped by newer wreaths tossed lovingly in to wilt and turn to dust in their turn, like those cast in before them in memory of that other dust asleep below.

Turning aside from the central walk that halved the cemetery, Ronald strolled along, his hands in his pockets, his eyes listlessly fixed on the orange-colored fumes and rolling smoke that welled out of tall chimneys in the hollow beyond, an idle student-tune humming on his lips, and his thoughts nowhere, and everywhere, at once. Happening to look away from the dun smoke-trail for an instant, he found something of greater in-

terest close at hand. An old man stooped stiffly over a simple mound, busied among the flowers that hid it, and by his side crouched a young girl, perhaps fourteen years old, who peered up at Ronald with questioning, velvet brown eyes. The old man heard the intruder's steps crunching in the damp gravel, and slowly looked up too.

"Good morning, mein Herr," said Ronald, pleasantly.

The old man remained for an instant blinking nervously, and shading his eyes from the full sunlight that fell on his face. A quiet face it was, and very old, seamed and creased by mazy wrinkles that played at aimless cross-purposes with each other, beginning and ending nowhere. His thick beard and thin, curved nose looked just a little Jewish, and seemed at variance with his pale blue eyes that were still bright in spite of age. And yet, bearded as he was, there was a lurking expression about his features that bordered upon effeminacy, and made the treble of his voice sound even more thin and womanish as he answered Wyde's greeting.

"Good morning, too, mein Herr. A stranger to our town, I see."

"Yes; but soon not to be called one, I hope. I am here for the winter."

"A cold season—a cold season; our northern winters are very chilling to an old man's blood." And slouching together into a tired stoop, he resumed his simple task of knotting a few flowers

into a clumsy nosegay. Ronald stood and watched him with a vague interest. Presently, the flowers being clumped to his liking, the old man pried himself upright by getting a good purchase with his left hand in the small of his back, and so deliberately that Ronald almost fancied he heard him creak. The girl rose too, and drew her thin shawl over her shoulders.

"You Germans love longer than we," said Ronald, glancing at the flowers that trembled in the old man's bony fingers, and then downwards to the quiet grave; "a lifetime of easy-going love and a year or two of easier-forgetting are enough for us."

"Should I forget my own flesh and blood?" asked the old man, simply.

Ronald paused a moment, and, pointing downwards, said:

"Your daughter, then, I fancy?"

"Yes."

"Long dead?"

"Very long; more than fifty years."

Ronald stared, but said nothing audibly. Inwardly he whispered something about being devilish glad to make the wandering Jew's acquaintance, rattled the loose gröschen in his pocket, and turned to follow the tottering old man and firm-footed child down the walk. After a dozen paces they halted before a more ambitious tombstone, on which Ronald could make out the well-remembered name of Plattner. The child

took the flowers and laid them reverently on the stone.

"It seems to me almost like arriving at the end of a pilgrimage," said Ronald, "when I stand by the grave of a man of science. Perhaps you knew him, mein Herr?"

"He was my pupil."

"Whew!" thought Ronald, "that makes my friend here a centenarian at least."

"My pupil and friend," the feeble voice went on; "and, more than that, my daughter's first lover, and only one."

"Ach so!" drawled Ronald.

"And now, on her death-day, I take these poor flowers from her to him, as I have done all these years."

Something in the pathetic earnestness of his companion touched Ronald Wyde, and he forthwith took his hands out of his pockets, and didn't try to whistle inaudibly—which was a great deal for him to do.

"I know Plattner well by his works," he said; "I once studied mineralogy for nearly a month."

"You love science, then?"

"Yes; like every thing else, for diversion."

"It was different with him," quavered the old man, pointing unsteadily to the head-stone. "Science grew to be his one passion, and many discoveries rewarded him for his devotion. He was groping on the track of a far greater achievement when he died."

"May I ask what it was?" said Ronald, now fairly interested.

"The creation and isolation of the principle of Life!"

This was too much for Ronald Wyde; down dived his restless hands into his trowser's pockets again, and the gröschen rattled as merrily as before.

"I have made quite a study of biology, and all that sort of thing," said he; "and, although a good deal of a skeptic, and inclined to follow Huxley, I can't bring myself to conceive of life without organism. Such theorizing is, to my mind, on a par with the illogical search for the philosopher's stone and a perpetual motor."

The old man's eyes sparkled as he turned full upon Ronald.

"You dismiss the subject very airily, my young friend," he cried; "but let me tell you that I—I, whom you see here—have grappled with such problems through a weary century, and have conquered one of them."

"And that one is—"

"The one that conquered Plattner!"

"Do I understand you to claim that you have discovered the life-principle?"

"Yes."

"Will you permit an utter stranger to inquire what is its nature?"

"Certainly. It is twofold. The ultimate principle of life is carbon; the cause of its combinati·n

with water, or rather with the two gaseous elements of water, and the development of organized existence therefrom, is electricity."

Ronald Wyde shrugged his broad shoulders a little, and absently replied,

"All I can say, mein Herr, is, that you've got the bulge on me."

"I beg your pardon—"

"Excuse me; I unconsciously translated an Americanism. I mean that I don't quite understand you."

"Which means that you do not believe me. It is but natural at your age, when one doubts as if by instinct. Would you be convinced?"

"Nothing would please me better."

With the same painful effort as before, the old man straightened himself and made a piercing clairvoyant examination into and through Ronald Wyde's eyes, as if reading the brain beyond them.

"I think I can trust you," he mumbled at last. "Come with me."

Leaning on the young girl's arm, the old philosopher faltered through the cemetery and into the town, followed by Wyde, his hands again pocketed for safety. Groups of released churchgoers, sermon-fed, met them, and once in a while some stout burgher would nod patronizingly to Ronald's guides, and get in response a shaky, sidelong roll of the old man's head, as if it were mounted on a weak spiral spring. Further on they intersected a knot of students, who eyed them

askance and exchanged remarks in an undertone. Keeping on deeper into the foul heart of the town, they passed through swarms of idle children playing sportlessly, as poverty is apt to play, in the dank shadows of the narrow street. They seemed incited to mirth and ribaldry by the sight of Ronald's new friend, and one even ventured to hurl a clod at him; but this striking Ronald instead, and he facing promptly to the hostile quarter from whence it came, caused a sudden slinking of the crowd into unknown holes, like a horde of rats, and the street was for a time empty save for the little party that threaded it. Ronald began to think that the old man's sanity was gravely called in doubt by the townsfolk, and would readily have backed out of his adventure but for the curiosity that had now got the upper hand of him.

Presently the old man sidled into a dingy doorway, like a tired beast run to earth, and Ronald followed him, not without a wish that the architect had provided for a more efficient lighting of the sombre passage-way in which he found himself. A sharp turn to the right after a dozen groping-paces, a narrow stairway, a bump or two against unexpected saliences of rough mortared wall, two steps upward and one very surprising step downward through a cavernous doorway that took away Ronald's breath for a moment, and sent it back again with a hot, creeping wave of sudden perspiration all over him, as is the way

with missteps, and two more sharp turns, brought the three into a black no-thoroughfare of a hall, whose further end was closed by a locked door. The girl here rubbed a brimstone abomination of a match into a mal-odorous green glow, and by its help the old man got a tortuous key into the snaky opening in the great lock, creakily shot back its bolt, swung open the door, and motioned Ronald to enter.

He found himself in a long and rather narrow room, with a high ceiling, duskily lighted by three wide windows that were thickly webbed and dusted, like ancestral bottles of fine crusty Port. A veritable den it was, filled with what seemed to be the wrecks of philosophical apparatus dating back two or three generations—ill-fated ventures on the treacherous main of science. Here a fat-bellied alembic lolled lazily over in a gleamy sand-bath, like a beach-lost galleon at ebb-tide; and there a heap of broken porcelain-tubing and shreds of crucibles lay like bleaching ship-ribs on a sullen shore. Beyond, by the middle window, stood a furnace, fireless, and clogged with gray ashes. Two or three solid old-time tables, built when joiners were more lavish of oaken timber than nowadays, stood hopelessly littered with retorts, filtering funnels, lamps, ringstands, and squat-beakers of delicate glass, caked with long-dried sediment, all alike dust-smirched. Ronald involuntarily sought for some huge Chaldaic tome, conveniently open at a favorite spell, or a handy

crocodile or two dangling from the square beams overhead, but saw nothing more formidable than a stray volume of "Kant's Critique of Pure Reason." Taking this up and glancing at its fly-leaf, he saw a name written in spidery German script, almost illegible from its shakiness—"Max Lebensfunke."

"Your name?" he asked.

"Yes, mein Herr," answered the old man, taking the volume and caressing it like a live thing in his fumbling hands. "This book was given to me by the great Kant himself," he added.

Reverently replacing it, he advanced a few steps toward the middle of the room. Ronald followed, and, turning away from the windows, looked further around him. In striking contrast to the undisturbed disorder, so redolent of middle-age alchemy, was the big table that flanked the laboratory through its whole length. It began with a powerful galvanic battery, succeeded by a wiry labyrinth of coils and helices, with little keys in front of them like a telegraph-office retired from business; these gave place to many-necked jars wired together by twos and threes, like oath-bound patriots plotting treason; beyond them stood a great glass globe, connected with a sizable air-pump, and filled with a complexity of shiny wires and glassware; next loomed up a huge induction-magnet, carefully insulated on solid glass supports; and at the further extremity of the table lay—a corpse.

Ronald Wyde, in spite of his many-sided experience of dissection-rooms, and morgues, and other ghastlinesses to which he had long since accustomed himself from principle, drew back at the sight—perhaps because he had come to this strange place to clutch the world-old mystery of the life-essence, and found himself, instead, confronted on its threshold by the equal mystery of death.

Herr Lebensfunke smiled feebly at this movement.

"A subject received this morning from Berlin," he said, in answer to Wyde's look of inquiry. "A sad piece of extravagance, mein Herr—a luxury to which I can rarely afford to treat myself."

Ronald Wyde bent over the body and looked into its face. A rough, red face, that had seemingly seen forty years of low-lived dissipation. The blotched skin and bleary eyes told of debauchery and drunkenness, and a slight alcoholic fœtidness was unpleasantly perceptible, as from the breath of one who sleeps away the effects of a carouse.

"I hope you don't think of restoring this soaked specimen to life?" said Ronald.

"That is still beyond me," answered the old man, mournfully. "As yet I have not created life of a higher grade than that of the lowest zoöphytes."

"Do you claim to have done as much as that?"

"It is not an idle claim," said Herr Lebensfunke, solemnly. "Look at this, if you doubt."

"This" was the great crystal globe that rose

from the middle of the long table, and dominated its lesser accessories, as some great dome swells above the clustered houses of a town. Tubes passing through its walls met in a smaller central globe half filled with a colorless liquid. Beneath this, and half encircling it, was an intricate maze of bright wire ; and two other wires dipped into it, touching the surface of the liquid with their platinum tips. Within the liquid pulsed a shapeless mass of almost transparent spongy tissue.

"You see an aggregation of cells possessed of life—of a low order, it is true, but none the less life," said the philosopher, proudly. "These were created from water chemically pure, with the exception of a trace of ammonia, and impregnated with liquid carbon, by the combined action of heat and induced electricity, in vacuo. Look !"

He pressed one of the keys before him. Presently the wire began to glow with a faint light, which increased in intensity till the coil flamed into pure whiteness. Removing his finger, the current ceased to flow, and the wire grew rapidly cool.

"I passed the whole strength of sixty cups through it to show you its action. Ordinarily, with one or two carbon cells, and refining the current by triple induction, the temperature is barely blood-warm."

"Pardon an interruption," said Ronald. "You spoke of liquid carbon ; does it exist ?"

"Yes ; here is some in this phial. See it—how pure, how transparent ! how it loves and hoards

the light!" The old man held the phial up as he spoke, and turned it round and round. "See how it flashes! No wonder, for it is the diamond, liquid and uncrystallized. Think how these fools of men have called diamonds precious above all gems through these many weary years, and showered them on their kings, or tossed them to their mistresses' feet, never dreaming that the silly stone they lauded was inert, crystallized life!"

"Can't you crystallize diamonds yourself?" asked Wyde, "and make Freiberg a Golconda and yourself a Crœsus?"

"It could be done, after the lapse of thousands of years," replied Herr Lebensfunke. "Place undiluted liquid carbon in that inner globe, keep the coil at a white heat, and if Adam had started the process, his heir-at-law would have a koh-i-noor to-day, and a nice lawsuit for its possession."

Ronald Wyde bent toward the globe once more and examined the throbbing mass closely, whistling softly meanwhile.

"If you can create this cellular life, why not develop it still higher into an organism?"

"Because I can only create life — not soul. Years ago I was a freethinker, now my discoveries have made me a deist; for I found that my cells, living as they were, and possessing undoubted parietal circulation, were not germs; and though they might cluster into a bulk like this, as bubbles do to form froth, to evolve an animal or plant

from them was far beyond me; that needs what we call soul. But, in searching blindly for this higher power, I grasped a greater discovery than any I had hoped for—the power to isolate life from its bodily organism."

"You have to keep the bottle carefully corked, I should imagine," laughed Ronald.

"Not quite," said Herr Lebensfunke, joining in the laugh. "Life is not glue. My grand discovery is the life-magnet."

"Which has the post of honor on your table here, has it not?" inquired Ronald, drawing his hand from his pocket and pointing to the insulated coil.

The old man glanced keenly at his hand as he did so; at which Ronald seemed confused, and pocketed it again abruptly.

"Yes, that is the life-magnet. You see this bent glass tube surrounded by the helix? That tube contains liquid carbon. I pass through the helix a current of induced electricity, generated by the action of these sixty Bunsen cups upon a succession of coils with carbon cores, and the magnet becomes charged with soulless life. I reverse the stream—what was positive now is negative, and the same magnet will absorb life from a living being to an extent only to be measured by thousands of millions."

"Then, what effect is produced on the body you pump the life from?"

"Death."

"And what becomes of the soul?"

"I don't quite know. I fancy, however, that the magnet absorbs that too."

"Can it give it back?"

"Certainly; otherwise my life-magnet would belie its name, and be simply an ingenious and expensive instrument of death. By reversing the conditions, I can restore both soul and life to the body from which I drew them, or to another body, even after the lapse of several days."

"Have you ever done so?"

"I have."

Ronald looked reflectively downward to his boot-toe, but seemed to find nothing there—except a boot-toe.

"I say, my friend," he spoke at last, "haven't you got a pin you can stick in me? I'd like to know if I'm dreaming."

"I can convince you better than by pins," replied Herr Lebensfunke. "Let me see that hand you hide so carefully."

Ronald Wyde slowly drew it from his pocket, as reluctantly as though it were a grudged charity dole, and extended it to the old man. Its little finger was gone.

"A defect that I am foolishly sensitive about," said he. "A childish freak—playing with edged tools, you know. A boy-playmate chopped it off by accident: I cut his head open with his own hatchet, and made an idiot of him for life—that's all."

"I could do this," said Herr Lebensfunke, pausing on each word as if it were somewhat heavy, and had to be lifted out of his cramped chest by force; "I could draw your entity into that magnet, leaving you side by side with this corpse. I could dissect a finger from that same corpse, attach it to your own dead hand by a little of that palpitating life-mass you have seen, pass an electric stream through it, and a junction would be effected in three or four days. I could then restore you to existence, whole, and not maimed as now."

"I don't quite like the idea of dying, even for a day," answered Wyde. "Couldn't you contrive to lend me a body while you are mending my own?"

"You can take that one, if you like."

Ronald Wyde looked once more at the sodden features of the corpse, and smiled lugubriously.

"A mighty shabby old customer," he said, "and I doubt if I could feel at home in his skin; but I'm willing to risk it for the sake of the novelty of the thing."

The old philosopher's thin face lit up with pleasure.

"You consent, then?" he chuckled in his womanish treble.

"Of course I do. Begin at once, and have done with it."

"Not now, mein Herr; some modifications must be made in the connections—mere matters of detail. Come again to-night."

"At what hour?"

"At ten. Mein Vögelein, show the Herr the way out."

The girl, who had been moving restlessly about the room all this time, with her wild brown eyes fixed now on Ronald, now on the old man, and oftener in a shy, inquisitive stare on the corpse, lit a dusty chemical lamp and led the way down the awkward passages and stairs. Ronald tried to start a conversation with her as he followed.

"You are too young, my birdling, to be accustomed to such sights as this upstairs."

"Birdling is not too young, she's almost fourteen," said the girl, proudly. "And she likes it, too; it makes her think of mother. Mother went to sleep on that table, mein Herr."

"Poor thing! she's half-witted," thought Wyde as he passed into the street. "By-by, birdie."

Home he walked briskly, to be met under his flaming balcony by Lottchen's kindly afternoon greeting. How had mein Herr passed his Sabbath? she asked.

"Quietly enough, Lottchen. I met an old philosopher in the God's-Acre, and went home with him to his shop. Have you ever heard of Herr Doctor Lebensfunke?"

"Yes, mein Herr. Wrong here, they say;" and she tapped her wide, round German forehead, and lifted her eyes expressively heavenward.

"Sold himself to the devil, eh?" asked Wyde.

Lottchen was not quite sure on that point.

Some said one thing, and some another. There was undoubtedly a devil, else how could good Doctor Luther have thrown his inkstand at him? But he had never been seen in Doctor Lebensfunke's neighborhood; and, on the whole, Lottchen was inclined to attribute the Herr Doctor's trouble to an indefinable something whose nature was broadly hinted at by more tapping of the forehead.

Ronald Wyde mounted the stairs, locked himself in his room, and wished himself out of the scrape he was getting into. But, being in for it now, he lit a cigar, and tried to fancy the processes he would have to go through, and how he, a natty and respectable young fellow, would look and feel in a drunkard's skin. His conjectures being too foggily outlined to please him, he put them aside, and waited impatiently enough for ten o'clock.

A moonlight walk through the low streets, transfigured by the silver gleam into fairy vistas—all but the odor—brought him to Herr Lebensfunke's house. Simple birdling, on the lookout for him, piloted him through the unsafe channel, and brought him to anchor in the dimly-lit room.

"All is ready," said the philosopher, as he trembled forward and shook Ronald's hand. "See here." Zig-zags of silk-bound wire squirmed hither and thither from the life-magnet. Two of them ended in carbon points. "And here, too, my young friend, is your new finger."

It lay, detached, in the central globe, and on its

severed end atoms of protoplasm were already clustered. "Literally a second-hand article," thought Ronald; but, not venturing to translate the idiom, he only bowed and said, "Ach so!" which means any thing and every thing in German.

It was not without a very natural sinking of the heart that Ronald Wyde divested himself of his clothing, and took his position, by the old man's direction, on the stout table, side by side with the dead. A flat brass plate pressed between his shoulders, and one of the carbon points, clamped in a little insulated stand, rested on his bosom and quivered with the quickened motion of the heart beneath it. The other point touched the dead man's breast.

"Are you ready?"

"Yes."

The old man pressed a key, and as he did so a sharp sting, hardly worse than a leech's bite, pricked Ronald Wyde's breast. A sense of languor crept slowly upon him, his feet tingled, his breath came slowly, and waves of light and shade pulsed in indistinct alternation before his sight; but through them the old man's eyes peered into his, like a dream. Presently Ronald would have started if he could, for two old philosophers were craning over him instead of one. But as he looked more steadily, one face softly dimmed into nothing, and the other grew brighter and stronger in its lines, while the room flushed with an unaccount-

able light. The little key clicked once more; a vague sensation that the current had somehow ceased to flow, roused him, and he raised himself on his elbow and looked in blank bewilderment at his own dead self lying by his side in the daylight, while the sunrise tried to peer through the webbed panes.

"Is it over?" he asked, with a puzzled glance around him; and added, "Which am I?"

"Either, or both," answered Herr Lebensfunke. "Your identity will be something of a problem to you for a day or two."

Aided by the old man, Ronald awkwardly got into the sleazy clothes that went with the exchange—growing less and less at home each minute. He felt weak and sore; his head ached, and the wound left by the fresh amputation of his little finger throbbed angrily.

"I suppose I may as well go now," he said. "When can I get my own self there back again?"

"On Thursday night, if all works well," said the old man. "Till then, good-day."

Ronald Wyde's first impulse, as he shambled into the open air, was to go home; but he thought of the confusion his sadly-mixed identity would cause in Frau Spritzkrapfen's quiet household, and came to a dead stop to consider the matter. Then he decided to quit the town for the interminable four days—to go to Dresden, or anywhere. His next step was to slouch into the nearest beer-cellar and call for beer, pen, and paper. While waiting

for these, he surveyed his own reflection in the dingy glass that hung above the table he sat by—a glass that gave his face a wavy look, as if seen through heated air. He felt an amused pride in his altered appearance, much as a masquerader might be pleased with a clever disguise, and caught himself wondering whether he were likely to be recognized in it. Apparently satisfied of his safety from detection, he turned to the table and wrote a beer-scented note to Frau Spritzkrapfen, explaining his sudden absence by some discreet fiction. He got along well enough till he reached the end, when, instead of his own flowing sign-manual, he tipsily scrawled the unfamiliar name of Hans Kraut. Tearing the sheet angrily across, he wrote another, and signed his name with an effort. He was about to seek a messenger to carry his note, when it occurred to him to leave it himself, which he did ; and had thereby the keen satisfaction of hearing pretty Lottchen confess, with a blush on her fair German cheek, that they would all miss Herr Wyde very much, because they all loved him. Turning away with a sigh that was very like a hiccough, he trudged to the railway-station and took a ticket to Dresden, going third-class as best befitting his clothes and appearance.

He felt ashamed enough of himself as the train rumbled over the rolling land between Freiberg and the capital, and gave him time to think connectedly over what had happened, and what he now was. His fellow-passengers cast him sidelong

looks, and gave him a wide berth. Even the quaint, flat-arched windows of one pane each, that winked out of the red-tiled roofs like sleepy eyes, seemed to leer drunkenly at him as they scudded by.

Ronald Wyde's account of those days in Dresden was vague and misty. He crept along the bustling streets of that sombre, gray city, that seemed to look more natural by cloud-light than in the full sunshine, feeling continually within him a struggle between the two incompatible natures now so strangely blended. Each day he kept up the contest manfully, passing by the countless beer-cellars and drinking-booths with an assumption of firmness and resolution that oozed slowly away toward nightfall, when the animal body of the late Hans Kraut would contrive to get the better of the animating principle of Ronald Wyde; the refined nature would yield to the toper's brute-craving, with an awful sense of its deep degradation in so succumbing, and, before midnight, Hans was gloriously drunk, to Ronald's intense grief.

Time passed somehow. He had memories of sunny lounges on the Bruhl'sche Terrace, looking on the turbid flow of the eddied Elbe, and watching the little steamboats that buzzed up and down the city's flanks, settling now and then, like gad-flies, to drain it of a few drops of its human life. Well-known friends, whose hands he had grasped not a week before, passed him unheedingly; all save one, who eyed him for a moment, said "Poor

devil !" in an undertone, and dropped a silber-gro' into his maimed hand. He felt glad of even this lame sympathy in his lowness ; but most of all he prized the moistened glance of pity that flashed upon him from the great dark eyes of a lovely girl who passed him now and then as he slouched along. Once, a being as degraded and scurvy as his own outward self, turned to him, called him "Dutzbruder," asked him how he left them all in Berlin, stared at Ronald's blank look of non-recognition, and passed on with a muttered curse on his own stupidity in mistaking a stranger, in broad daylight, for his crony Kraut.

Another memory was of the strange lassitude that seemed to almost paralyze him after even moderate exertion, and caused him to drop exhausted on a bench on the terrace when he had shuffled over less than half its length. More than once the suspicion crept upon him that only a portion of his vitality now remained to him, and that its greater part lay mysteriously coiled in Herr Lebensfunke's life-magnet. And this, in turn, broadened into a doubting distrust of the Herr himself—a dread lest the old man might in some way appropriate this stock of life to his own use, and so renew his fast-expiring lease for a score or two of years to come. At last this dread grew so painfully definite, that he hurried back to Freiberg a day before his appointed time, and once more found his twofold self wandering through its devious streets.

It was long after dark, and a thin rain slanted on the slippery stones, as he again made his way through the deserted and sleepy paths of the town to the old philosopher's house. He was wet, chilled, weary, and sick enough at heart as he leaned against the cold stone doorway and waited for an answer to his knock. The plash of the heavier rain-drops from the tiled leaves was the only sound he heard for many minutes, until, at last, pattering feet neared him on the inside, and a child's voice asked who was there. To his friendly response the door was opened half-wide, and Vögelein's blank, pretty face peeped through.

Was Herr Lebensfunke at home? No; he had said that he wasn't at home; but then, she thought he was in the long room where mamma went to sleep. Could he be seen? No, she thought not; he was very tired, and, in her own—Vögelein's—opinion, he was going to sleep too, just as mamma did. And the wizened little face, with its eldritch eyes and tangled hair, was withdrawn, and the door began to close. Ronald forced himself inside, and grasped the child's arm.

"Vögelein, don't you know me?"

The girl, in nowise startled, gravely set her flickering candle on the door-step, looked up at him wonderingly, as if he were an exhibition, and said she thought not, unless he had been asleep on the table.

"Good heavens!" cried Ronald, "can this

child talk of nothing but people asleep on a table?"

But, as he spoke, a thought whirred through his brain. He drew the poor half-witted thing close to him and asked:

"Can Vögelein tell me something about mamma, and how she went to sleep?"

The child rambled on, pleased to find a listener to her foolish prattle. All he could connect into a narrative was, that the girl's mother, some seven or eight years before, had been drained of her life by the awful magnet, and that, as the child said, "the Herr Doctor ever since had talked just like mamma."

His dread was well founded, then. The old man's one dream and aim was to prolong his wretched life; could he doubt that he would not now make use of the means he had so unwisely thrown in his way? He turned about, half maddened.

"Girl!" he cried, "I must see the old man! Where is he?"

He couldn't see him, she whined. He was asleep up there, on the table. At one o'clock he had said he would wake up.

He pushed past her, mounted to the long room, pressed open the unfastened door, and entered.

The old man and the corpse of his former self lay together under the light of a lamp that swung from the beam overhead. An insulated carbon point was directed to each white, still breast.

From the old man's hand a cord ran to a key beyond, arranged to make or break connection at a touch. By it stood a clock, with a simple mechanism attached that bore upon a second key like the first, evidently planned to press upon it when the hands should mark a given hour. The child had said that he would wake at one, and it was now past midnight.

Ronald Wyde comprehended it all now. The wily old man's feeble life had been withdrawn into the great magnet, and mixed therein with what remained of his own. In less than an hour the key would fall, and the double stream would flow into and animate his young body, which would then wake to renewed life; while the cast-off shell beside it, worn to utter uselessness by a toilsome century, would be left to moulder as a mothed garment.

Surely no time was to be lost; his life depended upon instant action. And yet, comprehending this, he went to work slowly, and as a somnambulist might, acting almost by instinct, and well knowing that a blunder now meant irrevocable death.

Carefully disengaging the cord from the old man's yet warm grasp, and setting the carbon point aside, he lifted the shrivelled corpse and bore it away, to cast it on the white rubbish-heap in one corner. Returning to his work, he stripped himself, and laid down in the old man's place. As he did so, the distant Minster bells rang the three-quarters.

Was there yet time?

He braced his shoulders firmly against the brass plate under them, and moved the carbon point steadily back to its place, with its tip resting on his breast; the silk-wrapped wire that dangled between it and the magnet quivering, as he did so, as with conscious life. Drawing a long breath, he tightened the cord, and heard a faint click as the key snapped down.

The same sharp sting as before instantly pricked his breast, tingling thrills pulsed over him, beats of light and shadow swept before his eyes, and he lost all consciousness. For how long he knew not. At last he felt, rather than saw, the lamp-rays flickering above him, and opened his eyes as though waking from a tired sleep. Sitting up, he gave a fearful look around him, as if dreading what he might see. The drunkard's body lay stretched and motionless beside him, and the clock marked three. He was saved!

Slipping down from his perilous bed, he resumed the old familiar garments that belonged to him as Ronald Wyde, shuddering with emotion as he did so. Only pausing to give one look at the pale heap in the shadowy corner, and at the other sleeper under the now dying lamp, he quitted the room and locked its heavy door upon the two silent guardians of its life-secrets. When he reached the street, he found the rain had ceased to drop, and that the cold stars blinked over the slumbrous town.

Before on he had taken leave of Frau Spritz-

krapfen, turned buxom Lottchen scarlet all over by a hearty, sudden, farewell-kiss, and was far on his way from Freiberg, with its red-vined balcony and its dark laboratory, never again to visit it or them. And as the busy engine toiled and shrieked, and with each beat of its mighty steam-heart carried him further away, his thoughts flew back and clustered around witless, brown-eyed birdling. Poor child, he never learned her fate.

* * * * * *

I heard this strange story from its hero, one sunny summer morning as we swept over the meadowy reaches of the Erie Railway, or hung along the cliffside by the wooded windings of the Susquehanna. When he had ended it, he smiled languidly, and, showing me his still-mutilated hand, said that the old doctor's job had been a sad bungle, after all. In fact, the only physical proof that remained to verify his story, was a curved blue spot where the ingoing current from the magnet had carried particles from the carbon point and lodged them beneath the skin. Psychologically, he was sadly mixed up, he said; for, since that time, he had felt that four lives were joined in him —his own, the remnant of Herr Lebensfunke's miserable hoard merged in that of poor birdling's mother, and, last of all, Hans Kraut's.

He left the cars soon afterward at Binghamton, watchfully followed by a stout, shabby man with a three days' beard stubbling his chin, who had occupied the seat in front of us, and had turned now

and then to listen for a moment to Ronald's rapid narration.

A week later, and I heard that he was dead—having committed suicide in a fit of delirium soon after his admission to the Binghamton Inebriate Asylum. The attendant who made him ready for burial noticed a singular blue mark on his left breast, that looked, he said, a little like a horse-shoe magnet.

OSGOOD'S PREDICAMENT.

By Elizabeth D. B. Stoddard.

OSGOOD took a cane-bottomed chair whose edges had given way from the application of boot soles, cane and umbrella ferules, and studied his predicament. He commenced this necessary study early in the morning in his room, which was in a boarding-house situated in this metropolis. The early carts were taking their way down town through a blue haze, which in the country pretigured a golden day. The milkman, the walk-sweeper, and the rag-picker, were the only creatures moving in Osgood's neighborhood. The time was propitious for meditation and resolve, but Osgood's head was not ready. The still Champagne that he had drank the night before buzzed in his brain. With a glass of it in his hand, under a side gas-light, in the drawing-room of his Aunt Formica, he had proposed marriage to a handsome dashing

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girl, and the handsome dashing girl had accepted him. They swallowed the bubbles on the "beaker's brim," thinking it was the Cup of Life they were drinking from. Neither supposed that the moment was one of exhilaration or enthusiasm. Osgood never felt so serious, or so determined to face the music, as he called it, which was the short for a philosophical design to march boldly through life, and shoulder its necessities with a brave spirit and a martial air.

Osgood was intelligent, agreeable, and handsome. He had advanced no further into life than to give this impression. He knew nothing more of himself than that he was intelligent, handsome, and "plucky." He had no father or mother, but he had an aunt who had married Mr. Formica; this pair, effete in themselves, belonged to that mysterious class who are always able to get their relatives places under Government. When Osgood was eighteen they obtained a place in the Sub-Treasury, which yielded him the income of fifteen hundred dollars. Aunt Formica expected a great deal from him in the way of deportment and dress. The exigencies of his position, she observed, compelled him to do as those around him did. Of course he never laid up any of his salary, but he kept out of debt, and in doing this he fulfilled the highest duty that came within his province. His associates were young men who had more money than he, and who expected him to spend as much as they spent. The houses he visited were in-

habited by people who took it for granted that all who came in contact with them were as rich as themselves. The Formica interest was large. When he went to Washington with his aunt, he went the rounds of the senators' houses and hotels in the way of calls, dinners, and parties. When he went to Boston with her he began his visits at the right hand of Beacon Street, and branched into the streets behind it, where as good blood abides, though it has not the same advantage of the air of the Common. Wherever he went expense was involved, in the way of gloves, bouquets, cards, fees to errand boys, exchange of civilities in lunches, cigars, ale, brandy, sherry, stage, hack, and car fare, which he bore like a hero.

Lily Tree, the girl whom he proposed to marry, belonged to a family of the Formica species. It sailed through society all a-taut with convention, and was *comme il faut* from stem to stern. Lily and Osgood had always known each other. They passed through the season of hoop and ball, dancing-school, tableaux, and charades together; sympathized in each other's embryonic flirtations; and were such fast friends that no one ever dreamed of any danger to them from love. But as the wagon that goes from the powder-mill in safety innumerable times at last carries the keg which explodes it, so Osgood and Lily at last touched the divine spark which threw them out of their old world into one they had not anticipated.

This was part of Osgood's predicament.

What made him do as he had done?

Why had Lily accepted him?

She would never, he argued, consent to go out of the area which bounded her ideas, and which comprised a small portion of New York, Boston, Washington, and the tour of Europe, which meant a week in London, six months in Paris, and ten days in Rome. Unless he descended from the Sub-Treasury, and sought some business, such as making varnish, glue, buttons, soap, sarsaparilla, or sewing machines, could he marry? What shrewdness had he in the place of capital to bring to bear on the requirements of these Yankee callings? How he worried over the prospect which looked so pleasant the night before! Champagne, flowers, light, and perfume were gone from it. He pitied himself in his helplessness. The thought of Lily deprived of her delicate evening dresses, her diurnal bouquets, caramels, and her pecunious caprices, was not pleasant. He could not see her in any light that made her so agreeable as in the light that he must certainly cause her to lose.

Something practical must be done.

Naturally he looked into his pocket-book. There was eighteen dollars in it—all the money he had. It was the last day in the month, however, and he was entitled to draw one hundred and twenty-five dollars. He shut his pocket-book and looked into his closet. He found there several pairs of patent-leather boots and a brilliant dressing-gown. "Pooh!" he said, peevishly, and shut

the door. He then examined his bureau: in its drawers were many socks, shirts, cravats, four sets of studs and sleeve-buttons, and five scarf-pins. He rattled the studs and buttons thoughtfully; but nothing came of it, and he closed the drawers. His eye then fell on a dress-coat which he had worn for the first time the evening before. He resolved to take the coat back to Wiedenfeldt, his tailor. This resolve was the nucleus probably of his future undertakings. He finished dressing and left the house. Before reaching Wiedenfeldt he purchased and drank a bottle of Congress Water. He also stopped at a favorite restaurant and made an excellent breakfast, and came away with a "Relampagos"—a small cigar of superior flavor—and three daily papers. His interview with Wiedenfeldt was satisfactory; the coat was taken back, and when he had settled the matter he felt as if a beginning had been made in a new and right direction.

That afternoon he drew his pay, and walked up town. The moment he entered his room his predicament fell upon him again, and his spirits sunk. He sat on the edge of his bed, so quiet in his misery that he began to hear the ticking of the watch in his pocket; it associated itself in his mind with the sound and motion of railroad-cars. He felt himself traveling hundreds of miles away, listening all the while to a rhythmic sound, which said, "Many a mile, many a mile." Why should he not go "many a mile, many a mile," in reality? He went out immediately and bought a valise

After that his demeanor was settled and tranquil. He then wrote three notes—to his chief, his Aunt Formica, and Lily. The first was a note of resignation ; the second conveyed the information to his aunt that he was sick of his place, had thrown it up, and was going out of town for a change of air. He regretted, when he began his note to Lily, that he had not sent her some flowers. A momentary impulse to go and see her stayed his hand ; but he remembered that she must be at Mrs. Perche's "sit-down supper" that evening, and resumed writing. He begged her to enjoy herself, and not miss him while he was away. He did not know what to write besides, but put in a few chaotic expressions which might or might not mean a great deal.

While he put a few necessary articles in the valise he wondered where he should go, never dropping the thought that he must go somewhere. The remainder of his wardrobe, including the brilliant dressing-gown, he packed in a trunk and locked it.

He rang the bell, and when the waiter came up asked for the landlady, Mrs. Semmes. The waiter thought that it was not too late to see her in her own parlor, and lingered, with his hand on his chin and his eyes on the valise.

"Jem," said Osgood, "I have left some boots in the closet, and some shirts in the drawers, which are at your service."

The alacrity with which Jem changed his atti-

tude and expression struck Osgood with a sense of pain. "How horribly selfish servants are!" he thought, taking his way down stairs. Mrs. Semmes hoped there was no trouble, and asked him to be seated. He looked at her earnestly; she was the only one to say farewell to. Never had he looked Mrs. Semmes in the face before; he had only seen the hand into which he had placed the price of his board.

"I came to tell you, Mrs. Semmes, that I am about to leave town for the present. Will you allow my trunk to remain here? If I do not return in a year and a day, break it open."

Mrs. Semmes promised to keep the trunk; took some money due her; wondered at his going away at that time of year, and asked him his destination.

"I think I shall go to Canada," he answered, vaguely.

"There must be snow there, by the accounts."

"Where shall I go?" he was about to say, but checked himself.

"If you were going East," she continued, "you would find the ground bare enough, especially in the neighborhood of the sea: the sea-winds melt the snow almost as soon as it falls."

"I think I will go East," he said, musingly. He sat so long without saying any thing, staring straight before him, that Mrs. Semmes began to feel fidgety. She recalled him to the present by walking to the window. He started, bade her good-by, and retired.

He tossed about all night in a feverish sleep, tormented with dreams which transformed Lily into a small child which he was compelled to carry in his arms, or furnished his Aunt Formica with a long spear, with which she pursued him, and was forever on the point of overtaking him.

At 8 o'clock A.M. he might have been seen by a detective at the Twenty-seventh Street dépôt. A few minutes after he was going through the tunnel; and, emerging from that, he considered himself fairly divided from New York. At the first station beyond the State-line of Massachusetts he consulted a map, and concluded to stop at the junction of the Old Colony Railroad. There he changed the route, and in the evening reached a town which seemed waiting to go somewhere else, where he passed the night.

The next morning he started on his travels again toward Cape Cod. Five miles beyond a large village, in a flat, sterile, gloomy region, he alighted with his baggage, and said, "This is the place for me." The train went on, and the dépôt-master went into his little den without noticing Osgood. Several tall school-girls, who had come to watch for the train, strolled down a cross-road, and he was alone. He went to the end of the platform and surveyed the country. He stood on the edge of a wide plateau along which ran the railroad-track. Beyond that a road deviated through dismal fields, by unpainted houses, large barns, and straggling orchards. Below the plateau a wide

marsh extended, intersected by crooked creeks, which gnawed into the black earth like worms. A rim of sea bordered the tongue of the marsh, but it was too far off to add life to the scene. The sedge, giving up all hope of being moistened by the salt waves, had died in great circles, which looked like mats of gray hair on some pre-Adamite monster's buried head.

Osgood determined to pursue the windings of the road. He plowed the sand for two miles, and at a sudden turn of the road came upon a house, with a number of barns and sheds attached to it. A dog with a stiff tail ran out from a shed and barked at him, and a pale-faced woman in a muslin cap appeared at a window of the house. He knocked at the door: she opened it.

"Will thee come in?" she asked.

He entered, following her as he would have followed a ghost. She moved a chair from the wall without the least noise, and he dropped upon it. As he looked at her his identity seemed slipping away—seemed to be slipping into an atmosphere connected with her and her surroundings. She brought him some water which she dipped from a pail near by, and held the cocoa-nut dipper which contained it to his lips.

"Thee has come to us from strange parts, I reckon, from thy looks."

"Yes," he answered, absently; "I needed change."

"There has been no change here since the

Indians went away. If thee will look across the road thee can see the ground is strewed with the bits of shells from their feasts."

He went to the window, and again remarked to himself, "This is the place for me."

"Could you," he asked, going toward her, "let me stay with you a while?"

"Did thee come to the Marsh End station this morning?"

"Yes; my valise is there."

"Thy parents are rich?"

"I have none."

"Thee has been well cared for, though."

"I have not left home because of any—" Misfortune, he was about to say, but that did not seem to be the right word; so he tried to think of something else to say. She saw his embarrassment, and said, quickly,

"I never have harbored a stranger; but if Peter likes, he may take thee."

Osgood thanked her so pleasantly that she determined he should stay. She asked him his name, his age, his place of residence, his business, and his intentions. Except in regard to the latter, his answer proved satisfactory; and when Peter returned at noon from the distant shore with a load of sea-weed, she introduced Osgood as if he were an old acquaintance of whom Peter was in a state of lamentable ignorance. He pushed his hat on the back of his head, shook hands with Osgood, and said, "Maria, will thee give me my dinner?"

taking no further notice of Osgood till she had placed it on the table. It consisted of stewed beans, boiled beef, apple-pie, and cheese. Osgood ate half a pie, and established himself in Peter's good graces.

"Thee will learn that Maria's pie-crust beats all," he said.

"Thee is ready to consent," said his wife, "to keep young Osgood a while?"

"I don't know yet," answered Peter.

But after dinner he harnessed his horse and went to the dépôt for Osgood's valise, which he carried up-stairs and deposited in the spare room. He then invited Osgood to take a look at the premises. He wished to make his own investigations in regard to Osgood without Maria's intervention. They lingered by the pig-sty, and while Peter scratched the pigs with a cord wood stick, exchanged views of men and things. Peter saw the capabilities of Osgood's character, and easily divined the manner of life he had led. He knew him to be selfish from ignorance, and because he had early formed the habits which impose self indulgence. Something in the young man's bearing won his heart — a certain impetuous simplicity and frankness which made him long to be of service to a nature unlike his own. Osgood found Peter genial, shrewd, and sad. Such a man he had never met. It seemed to him that Peter could set him straight in his own estimation; there was no nonsense about the old man, and yet he could see deep feeling in his dark,

cavernous eyes. The feeling which had oppressed him passed away, and another took its place which contained restoration, and faith in the future. He got into Peter's way by attempting to help fodder the cattle and "slick up" the barn. When the work was done, and while Peter fastened the barn-doors with an ox-bow, Osgood looked about him. It was a March afternoon; no wind blew, and no sun shone; but the gray round of the sky, which neither woods nor hills hid from his sight, rolled over him in soft commotion. The reddish, barren fields stretched in their flatness beyond his vision, and the narrow roads of yellow sand ran to nowhere. The world of God, he thought, he saw for the first time; and, away from the world of men, felt himself a *man.*

He looked so kindly upon Maria when he entered the house that she delayed the stream of the tea-kettle which she held over the teapot to admire him. The supper was the dinner—cold, with an addition of warm biscuits; and again Osgood ate himself into Peter's good graces.

The evening was passed in silence. Peter smoked, Maria mended, and Osgood reflected. A violent storm arose in the night, which lasted three days. They were improved by Maria and Peter in overhauling garden-seeds in the garret, and in setting up a leach-tub in the wood-house. Osgood assisted. When he was alone with Maria she talked to him of the boy who was lost at sea, and of the girl who died in childhood; with the

hungry eyes of a bereaved mother she looked upon him, and his heart was touched with a new tenderness. When he was alone with Peter the old man sounded the depths of the young man's soul with wise, pathetic, quaint speech; he went over the ground of his own life, which had been passed on the spot where he now was, with the exception of several mackerel voyages, and one in a merchant vessel to some of the southern ports of Europe. But when together Peter and Maria never talked with Osgood on personal matters. Between them a marital silence was kept, which was more expressive than the conjugal volubility which ordinarily exists; it proved that they had passed through profounder experiences.

When the storm ceased Peter went to the station for his Boston newspaper, which he read to Maria, who took it afterward and read it over to herself. Brother Quakers, Peter's neighbors, who lived out of sight, dropped in from time to time to exchange a word with Maria, or hold talks outside with Peter, with one foot in the rut and the other on the wagon-step. The present subject of interest, Osgood discovered, was the approaching Quarterly Meeting, and the mackerel fishery. Peter asked him to accompany himself and Maria to the town where the meeting was to be. They breakfasted at sunrise, when the day arrived, in full dress—Peter in a snuff colored suit, and Maria in a series of brown articles—dress, shawl, and bonnet. They started in good spirits in an open wagon,

with an improvised seat for Peter in front. Beyond a belt of pine woods stood the meeting-house, and a mile beyond the meeting-house lay the town, before a vast bay. Osgood drove alone into the town, and spent several hours there. He visited the shops to find some trifle for Maria, and then went through the town down to the shore. How happy he grew in the pure wind and the gay morning light! The gulls rode over the foaming wave-crests and dipped into their green walls, and hawks swooped between the steadfast sky and heaving deep. The sea traveled round and round before his eyes with a mad joy, and tempted him to plunge into it. He wrote his name in the heavy sand with a broken shell, and the water filtered out the letters; then he paved it in pebbles with the word *Strength.*

Peter and Maria were waiting for him when he returned to the meeting-house with the wagon.

"Thee has been skylarking," she said.

"After something for you," he answered, putting in her hand a handsome work-basket.

"Has thee so much money that thee must waste it on me, Osgood?"

But she was pleased with the gift. They rode home amicably. Peter, as a favor, allowed Osgood to drive, while he imparted to Maria sundry bits of information gained at the meeting.

"Mackerel" went in and out at Osgood's ears without gaining his attention, till he caught at something Peter said about the *Bonita* He

listened. Three vessels were about to sail from the town on a mackerel voyage, and the *Bonita* was one of them. He comprehended that Peter owned half the *Bonita*, and a plan struck him. He inquired into the subject, and obtained its history. That evening he proposed going on a mackerel voyage, which proposal so fired Peter that he declared he had a mind to go too; but Maria quenched his enthusiasm by going over the programme of work that must be done at home. She made no opposition to Osgood's going, but set before him in plain terms the hardships of such a voyage. He was not to be deterred, and Peter gave his consent, promising him a small share of the profits.

Osgood wrote to his Aunt Formica that night, assuring her that he already felt much better, and that he was about to enter into a new business, of which she should hear more. He also wrote Lily Tree a minute, lengthy epistle. He described his situation with Peter and Maria; told her how much board he paid—two dollars and fifty cents a week—and how well he had learned to do chores. He fed the pigs every day; he wished that she could see how well they thrived on the diet lately introduced by Peter and himself—a dry mash of boiled potatoes and meal, with an occasional horseshoe thrown in as a relish. Would she, he wondered, have enjoyed the day that he, Maria, and Peter made soft soap? He mentioned his intended voyage, and asked her if she liked sailors. Could

he have the hope, he continued, of her sympathy in his future enterprises, which perhaps would differ from those she had thought of for him? He avowed a change in himself. Would it affect her?

He sealed his letters, and began pacing his little room. Writing home had brought his old life near him again; the distance it had come to reach him seemed enormous.

"It was only a few days ago," he thought, "and yet I am so different!"

He rolled up his paper window-curtain and softly raised the window. The moon made the landscape look more vast and desolate than it was in the light of day. Under the horizon it revealed a strip of sea which shone as if it were the portal of another world whose light was reflected thereon. Osgood felt that he was an imprisoned soul this side of it. The light gave him an intimation of immortality. "Where is Lily's soul?" he asked. "Has she any dream beyond the life she is in?"

When Lily received Osgood's note she was angry; so was Mrs. Formica when she received hers. An intuition that Osgood repented his rashness touched Lily's pride, and preserved her silence. When the second letter came, she thought he had the intention of experimenting with her; a test, she concluded, was unendurable, not to be submitted to. Should she test him, and proclaim the engagement she meditated? it would be a relief to do something. She could not reach him with a letter, for he had gone on a mackerel

voyage beyond the limits of the post-office. She decided differently according to the light she had. Unlike Osgood, she was chained to the place she was in. She was alone, too; her mother was occupied with neuralgia, and her father was out of town half his time, on mysterious agencies which referred to canals. The newspaper reporters at Albany were well acquainted with Mr. Tree's name while they were putting into short-hand the doings of the Legislature. Mrs. Formica had no suspicion that Lily was the cause of Osgood's disappearance; she would not have regretted his absence so much on these grounds, for a match with Lily was not desirable.

Within a month Lily's engagement to Mr. Barclay Dodge was announced. He was a young man of fortune, whose father owed his rise in the world to corn starch, and who had made himself known by spending large sums of money on pictures, landscapes mostly, which had been indorsed by the public in exhibitions.

Mr. Barclay Dodge was happy; he had for more than two years followed Lily through all vicissitudes attendant upon the career of a young girl in society. From an exhilaration the pursuit had become a desperation. He had never suspected any man of being his rival, and accounted for the acquaintance between Lily and Osgood by believing that Lily was related to the Formica family. How she managed so suddenly to convince Barclay Dodge that it was safe for him to propose is a

mystery which none but a disappointed, contrary woman may reveal. He had the usual penetration of his sex in regard to such mysteries ; he was a man of sense and experience, but he was in love, and when a man is in love he only analyzes himself, and all that he learns is, that his love must be gratified.

In the whirl of his attentions, and the congratulations of her friends, the time passed quickly ; not so quickly, however, as to avert the plan by which the Fates were to bring her to a knowledge of herself.

Barclay proposed an immediate marriage. Lily declined the proposal with so much vehemence that he dared not insist. He pulled his mustache in rage after he left her, and wondered why he did not insist. By what means, he cogitated, could he make her yield her will to his ? Her resistance he set down to coyness ; all women had freaks ; they were alike in such matters. He divined after a while that she would let go the lasso at any moment if he proved restive ; so he played the submissive to perfection. If she ever saw his eyes flame, or any gesture which contained a threat, he never knew it ; but every revelation from him was a revelation to her of herself, and this was to be her education and her punishment.

" Where is your friend Osgood ?" he asked once.

" He has been away a long time," she answered, looking him full in the face, but with rather a stony expression in her eyes.

"He is your relative?"

"Oh no."

"No? I thought so, always seeing you in the same places."

"Our families have been acquainted always."

"Do you think he is handsome?"

"Yes."

"He is too short" (Barclay was tall), "and his eyes have a wandering, unsettled look."

"He is following his destiny by them," she answered, bitterly. "I wish that I could follow mine as a man can."

"Do you mean that you would like to follow Osgood's eyes?"

"By no means; I must see destiny by your eyes."

The words were pleasant, but the tone was malicious. It made his heart bound as if an invisible foe had come into his atmosphere to do battle with him, and he could do nothing.

"'With the vapors all around, and the breakers on our lee,
Not a light is in the sky, not a light is on the sea.' –

barring the lantern abaft," roared Osgood, from the deck of the schooner *Bonita*, which was tossing outside Cape Malabar.

"You may sing t'other side of your mouth afore long," bawled back the skipper. "We ain't fur from the Cormorant Rocks; the wind p'r'aps will shove us on the ledge."

"What, when we are just going home with full barrels?"

"The mackerel may be briled in Tophet for all we know."

The skipper was at the helm; Osgood and he were in the radius of a lantern which revealed their faces to each other. Outside of that was pitch darkness; the rain drove in fierce slants against them, and the wind howled all round the sea.

The skipper did not look concerned, neither did Osgood; but they were both wondering which would first break over the *Bonita*, the light of morning or the sea.

"Them boys are asleep, I s'pose, wet to the bone?" the skipper yelled.

"Yes."

"Let 'em sleep; there ain't a lanyard loose."

"What time must it be?"

"Hard onto 'leven. My old woman's turned in long afore this, *she* has; allus goes to bed on the stroke o' nine."

"She has thought of you to-night?"

"She has give me a prayer or so; she's the strictest kind. Now I'll luff, there is a lull comin'; peskiest storms that have lulls in 'em. You don't hear a swashing to a distance now?"

"No."

"Hark!"

A sound, not of wind nor sea, approached them —a rapid, rushing, cutting sound.

"Up with the helm!" shrieked the skipper to himself. "God Almighty, she is down on us!"

Osgood leaped up. The bowsprit of a large ship

was over him ; he threw up his arms instinctively and caught at something ; he felt his feet drawing over the skipper's head, and that he thumped it with his boots. He knew no more. The great ship crushed and plowed the *Bonita* into the waves as easily as a plow buries in the sod the stubble of the corn-field. Nothing signaled her destruction except the exclamation of the skipper ; nothing remained in the wide sea to show it. Her timbers and the sleeping crew went to the bottom together. Morning dawned on the wild scene, revealing no floating spar, no rib of boat, no stave of tub or barrel, no sailor's hat, no remnant of sail, no shred of clothing ; the jaws of the sea had closed over all. The ship, a Liverpool liner, driven out of her course by the storm, cruised round the spot for a few hours, and then went on her way, taking Osgood with her. He had clung to the folds of the forward sail ; and there he was found with his left wrist dislocated, his body strained and sore, and his mind wandering. He was no romantic sight with his red flannel shirt, fishy trowsers, cowhide boots, and hands pickled in brine. Still the ship's surgeon took to him, and found, when Osgood came to himself, that he had taken to a gentleman. He lent him a suit of customary black, and introduced him to his acquaintances. Osgood would have enjoyed the voyage across the Atlantic but for the horror which had fallen on his mind from the catastrophe of the *Bonita*.

"How old are you?" the surgeon asked him.

"About the first of March I was twenty-three; since then I have grown so old I have lost the reckoning."

"I'll have to give you quinine, my boy."

"Give me some of the tincture of Lethe."

"It is of no use to one to forget; don't be soft."

"Let us reason together, Sawbones."

The Doctor agreed, and Osgood began his story with, "Poor Peter," and finished it with asking, "Do you think I love her?"

"I'll bet a guinea," said the Doctor, "that she is married."

"She isn't," replied Osgood, indignantly.

"I am sure that she is engaged, as you call it, to somebody besides yourself."

"I know better."

"What do you propose doing when you get home?"

"What can I do with thirty dollars, which I left with Peter by-the-way?"

"We shall see what we shall see when we come face to face with Aunt Formica. I intend going the rounds with you in New York. I am a student."

He carried Osgood to his country-home beyond Liverpool, where they staid till the ship was ready to sail again. He amused his mother and sisters with stories of Osgood's adventures on sea and land, and represented him in the light of a "Jarley's wax-works" hero, till he was fairly cured of his melancholy.

Five months from the day on which he left New York Osgood returned, and stood on his Aunt Formica's door-steps with Dr. Black. They looked like a pair of Englishmen. Both had shiny, red noses, shiny, hard, narrow-brimmed hats, and shiny, narrow-toed boots, and the nap had brushed off their coats.

Osgood looked into the familiar area with emotion, and the Doctor looked at the windows with curiosity.

"They must be out of town," he said; "the house has been put in brown hollands."

But Osgood knew the habits of his aunt—knew that from the first of July till the first of October the house was put on an out-of-town footing; and that she skirmished between city and country, or watering place. The bell was answered by a servant he did not know.

"I wish to see Mrs. Formica," he said, brushing past her, and entering the dark parlor. "Dr. Black and friend say."

Mrs. Formica came in a moment after with a slight air of amazement, which increased to astonishment when she saw her nephew. She gave a little yelp as he embraced her, and said, "Where *have* you been?"

"To Cape Cod, and to Europe. I have been shipwrecked, aunt—that is, I lost my mackerel venture, and have been taken care of by my noble friend, Dr. Black."

Aunt Formica grew pale at the word "ship-

wrecked," and turned to Dr. Black. Something in his face made her extend her hand and give him a warm welcome.

"Black may stay here while he is in port, mayn't he? He will amuse you with yarns about me."

"Of course," she replied. "Now tell me the whole story."

Between Osgood and the Doctor it was related.

"Why did you ever go from me?" she asked, wiping away a real tear.

"I believe, aunt, I shall keep up the business of going—it suits me. I can never live through your conventional cramps."

She did not think it prudent to combat him just then; but made a mental memorandum that something must be done that would change his foolish resolution. A plan developed at dinner that evening.

"I had a note yesterday from Mrs. Senator Conch," said Mrs. Formica. "She will be in Saratoga this week, and begs me to meet her there. Formica and I have been talking it over, Osgood, and we think that it will be pleasant for Dr. Black and you to go up for a week. You will go, Doctor?"

"Thank you, Madam, provided Osgood is not averse."

"Any of our set there?" Osgood asked.

"The Trees went up last Saturday with Barclay Dodge. They are making an extensive tour this year."

"What's Barclay Dodge along for?"

"He is engaged to Lily Tree!"

"Ah!" said Osgood, looking at the Doctor, who could not help giving him a malicious grimace. "How long since? It's a capital match, ain't it?"

"The engagement must have been announced soon after you left."

This reply put Osgood in a brown study. What impulse, he mused, had prompted Lily to give herself to Barclay Dodge? Would *he* have done so?

Dr. Black commented on Osgood's face, and considered himself in a fair way to make studies.

"As far as money goes," continued Mrs. Formica, "it may be called a good match; but certainly not as far as family goes."

"Family!" echoed Dr. Black, softly.

"His father was a tradesman," explained Mr. Formica, while Lily can go back to her great-grandfather before trade need be mentioned.

"Old Mr. Tree's father," remarked his wife, "was a brigadier-general in the Revolution."

"He was a drover, for all that," said Osgood.

Mrs. Formica changed the theme, and talked of Saratoga.

"We'll go," Osgood said, crossly; "but I must first go to my tailor."

Mrs. Formica held a private conversation with him after dinner, gave him a check, and told him not to worry about the future: she had a plan in view.

"Plans go by contraries with me, aunt."

"You owe it to me not to be perverse."

"I can't pay any debt."

Previous to going to bed Dr. Black and Osgood smoked several cigars.

"You strike me," said the Doctor, "as growing to the dramatic just now. One event runs into another with monstrous rapidity among you Americans. How you differ from the English! How is it that you catch fortune by the hair so?"

"We are passionate and quick-witted."

"And then you repudiate with ease."

"Bah! you imitate Sydney Smith."

"I did not mean in the sense of State bonds precisely."

"I think," Osgood groaned, "that I begin to feel like a snob again. What shall I do to be saved?"

"Go on in the groove that is making for you. I'll stand by and be the chorus. When I hear thy plaints of misery I will let fall the tear; but remember that 'laws determine even the fates.'"

"Bosh!"

Except a dispute between the Doctor and Osgood concerning a slouched hat, which the Doctor would not wear, the party succeeded in starting and arriving amicably at the Union in Saratoga. In a few hours Mrs. Formica knew who was there. The Trees were at the Union. Mrs. Senator Conch had taken a cottage; but the

Senator himself had stopped at Albany for a day to confer with the Governor. Old Madam Funchal of Philadelphia was at Congress Hall, with her train, and Mrs. Romeo Pipps Bovis and husband, from Boston. All her friends were round her; that is, the traveling set she was in the habit of meeting; and her spirits rose to the occasion. These particulars she detailed, in a white muslin morning-dress, to Osgood, who, dressed in a new cream-colored suit, lounged in the doorway of a small parlor off the hall. He shouldered round just in time to come face to face with Lily Tree, who was passing on the arm of Barclay Dodge. She stopped, of course, to shake hands with Mrs. Formica, whose apparently warm kiss fell on the edge of a braid of her chestnut hair with the weight and coldness of a snow-flake. Her face settled into rigidity when she turned to speak to Osgood, and, like a transparent boy, he looked, with all the earnestness his gray eyes were capable of, straight into hers. Aunt Formica and Barclay read a story at once upon the text his countenance furnished; but they both made the mistake of believing that Lily had rejected him. Lily was too much occupied in managing her own feelings to divine Osgood's. The imperative necessity of concealment, which all tutored women feel, governed her. She laughed a great deal, though nobody said a witty thing, and kept her eyes going between Mrs. Formica and Barclay with a steadiness which equaled the movements of the wax women in the

Broadway shop windows. Mr. Formica and Dr. Black added themselves to the party, and the relief of an introduction to the Doctor came to Lily. She approached him, and his honest face induced her to skirmish lightly with him ; but not a word did he utter of the whys and wherefores of his being with Osgood. He would not, at any rate, extend his self-elected office of chorus so far as to include her. He felt a dislike toward her. She was too thin, he thought ; there was an air of wear and tear about her which was not pleasant. He felt, too, that she knew more than Osgood ; and a woman, in his estimation, should never be the intellectual superior of a man she might make choice of. But the Doctor was an Englishman ; his ideas of women had been developed by the cynical Thackeray and the material Dickens. There was a line between the two classes of women he only believed to exist—the bad capable woman and the good foolish woman—which could never be crossed by one or the other. The elements which go to make up a man, of good and evil mixed, never enter into the composition of the women of Englishmen of the present time. It is possible that Lily discovered Dr. Black's impression : she discovered it so nearly that she was certain Osgood had talked of her with him. Why had he ? she wondered.

In a few minutes the party fell apart as naturally as it had come together. Lily went on her walk with Barclay ; after which she retired to dress for

luncheon, but instead of appearing thereat kept her room till evening.

Osgood avoided every body; he was tormented with an idea that Lily had suffered. There was no reason for his thinking so; he derived the idea from reasoning with himself—reasoning which meeting with her had put in play. In the evening he went to the drawing-room, and waited till he saw her come in. Barclay, who was waiting too, darted toward her, but Osgood reached her first. When Barclay saw Lily take the arm which Osgood offered her, he turned away; but changing his mind again went up to them.

"Osgood," he said, in a frank voice, "you have not congratulated me on my engagement to your friend Lily."

Talk of heroes and martyrs; was not Lily both, at that moment, standing between these two men, with her hair dressed by a barber, and wearing a pale blue silk?

She eyed with a dainty air a little bouquet she held in her hand, of tea-roses and geraniums, and applied it to her nose with great deliberation. She felt an impetus from Osgood's arm. He had not answered Barclay, but was dragging her decorously out of the drawing-room. When they were alone he spoke to her.

"I have faced death since I saw you. I have grown a man; but until now, I did not know that I loved you. Which man do you belong to?"

"I have faced life since I saw you," she an-

swered, in a silvery voice, "and I belong to Barclay Dodge."

"Let us go back."

She tossed her bouquet over the railing of the veranda with a vindictive smile which would have astonished Osgood had he seen it.

Barclay was on the threshold; he looked at Lily and missed the bouquet; it was not in Osgood's button-hole—what could she have done with it? He looked at Osgood, and saw that his teeth were set with a passion which he could understand. Lily sat down in the nearest chair, and the young men moved away together.

"There is no need of any nonsense between us," said Osgood; "I was under a wrong impression regarding your engagement. I do offer my congratulations."

"Thank you," said Barclay, dubiously. And then they looked at each other with mad eyes. What a relief it would have been if they could have fought to the death!

Osgood left Barclay abruptly, and sought his Aunt Formica.

"Aunt!" he said, in a mild voice, "you need not ask Conch to blow any horn for me. I am going to sea."

"You will be better when she is married," she answered, significantly.

"I intend to before that. Your surmise is incorrect. You do not know that I ran away from Lily, as well as from you and the Sub-Treasury."

"What do you mean?"

"I offered myself to her; she accepted me, and on the strength of it I left her immediately. What do you think of me?"

"*She* is a little wretch. Did you care for her *very* much?"

"I thought she couldn't make a poor man a good wife, *after* I had asked her to be such. And I thought a poor man wouldn't be a good husband."

"It was the height of foolishness in both of you. It is most unwise for two people who have had luxuries separately to join and give them up."

"Luxuries! I wish you knew Peter and Maria."

"Osgood, you are morbid."

"Now, aunt, hear me. I am resolved to choose my own life; you must let me go. Whatever way I go, I shall not disgrace you. Formica may give me a sailor's outfit, if he chooses. Meantime let us enjoy ourselves for the remainder of the week." Notwithstanding she saw that he was determined, she applied to Senator Conch for a place, and he promised her one for Osgood in a department at Washington. When she told Osgood of it, he deigned no reply; but shook his head so fiercely that she forebore to trouble him.

Every day that he saw Lily she learned his nature by the contrast Barclay offered; she also learned to doubt herself. She never had been worthy of Osgood; it was fit that she should marry Barclay. She doubted whether she could keep up

the strain, which she knew Osgood's love would impose upon her, of self-abnegation, self-denial, isolation, and independence. She was not sure that she did not prefer enervation with Barclay to action with Osgood. Barclay watched them both. Jealousy gnawed his soul, not because he doubted Osgood, but because he had a suspicion that Lily once felt an interest in Osgood, which might be on the point of awakening. He tried experiments upon her feelings, pinched them, tore them up by the roots, extracted them with wrenches of his will, applied slow fire; but he learned nothing. His motive was so palpable to Osgood that he more than once felt on the point of knocking him down, and had he seen any encouraging sign from Lily he would have done it. He sometimes sighed over Barclay's failure, hateful as his conduct was.

Through the torture which Barclay applied to her she saw the passion which tortured him. Could a woman have been quailed into love she would have been at his feet; for he broke loose from his feigned submission and savagely demanded an equal return of his love. Then came the full measure of her punishment. She was incapable of rising to the strength, height, and abandon of Barclay's love. She was just as unworthy of him as she was of Osgood.

How she hated herself!

Somehow she heard that Osgood was going to sea. It is probable that Aunt Formica's feminine malice directed the disclosure to her ears. She

staggered Dr. Black a moment after she heard the report by asking if it was true.

"It is," he answered, with dignity, though inwardly scared.

She asked no other question of him, but snapped her fan together and walked away.

"Lily does not want you to go to sea," he said, when next he saw Osgood.

Osgood blew a ring of cigar smoke into the air and watched its disappearance.

"If wedding rings would only disappear that way!" said the Doctor.

Osgood blew another. "Include engagement rings," he said.

"One did vanish," replied the Doctor, slyly.

"I do not believe so. I swear she wears two this moment."

He left the Doctor, shut himself in his room, and wrote a long letter to Peter about himself, Lily, and Barclay, and posted it.

"Peter will understand me," he thought; "and more than that, he will understand Lily."

The last day of the Formicas' stay in Saratoga came. Osgood and Dr. Black appeared in traveling costume. Lily saw them enter the breakfast-room, and followed them with her father. As she passed their chairs, she asked, "Do you go to-day?" Osgood bowed. Dr. Black engaged Mr. Tree in making a remark.

"Why do you go?" she asked.

"Because Barclay stays," he whispered.

She turned a fiery red and passed on. He looked across the table once and met her eyes. She thought they said "*Farewell.*" A wild wish rose in her heart which compelled all her nature to give way to it, to speak to him once more; to see him alone, and force him to tell her if he loved her. She resolved to find him somewhere, at all hazards.

Dr. Black watched her also. His comment was, that she was "coming to a crisis," and was beautifully following out the laws which governed her sex. "Why can't they be something without hysterics?" he lamented. "Osgood will break down if he is not got away." He mechanically turned back his wristbands.

Lily waited in an ante-room, whose door Osgood must pass on his way out, and when he came, beckoned to him.

"Say your farewell to me as you feel it," she said, her eyes in a blaze.

"I can not."

"You shall."

Her eyes and her voice threw him into a tumult; had he followed the desire which assailed him, he would have taken her in his arms and carried her off. As it was, he looked at her, with a far-off look, as if he were calling some one to his aid.

"Osgood, Osgood!" she cried.

"Lily!"

She wrung her hands.

"Lily!" he said again.

"No, no, you need not speak; you may go."

Both of them gained a victory.

"After I have gone," he said, "if you think it proper, will you visit Peter and Maria?"

"Peter and Maria?"

"The friends I found when I left you, who helped me to find a better self—a self that at last finds *you*."

"I will go."

"To-morrow, then, I will write you of them."

He was gone.

In a few days she received a letter which contained the narrative of his sojourn with Peter and Maria, and a letter of introduction to them. She showed the letter to Barclay.

"Shall you meet him there?"

She gave him no answer.

"On what terms are you with yourself?" he continued.

"To answer candidly, bad terms."

"Could you marry that beggar on better?"

"Alas! no."

"Tell me, are you satisfied with your choice?"

She looked so irresolute that he trembled and was sorry that he had asked the question. Her better angel took wings, however, and she laid her hand on his shoulder, saying, "I make no other."

So she went on her travels with Barclay in her train, and Osgood went on a voyage in the *Stormy Petrel* as third mate. When autumn came, and the travelers had returned to town, Lily grew miser-

able. One day she told Barclay that she wanted to read him a poem. He composed himself to listen, and she read "The Palace of Art."

> "What is it that will take away my sin,
> And save me lest I die?'"—

she repeated.

"Barclay," she entreated, "let me throw *your* royal robes away, and go to those friends of Osgood's, where I may learn that I am either worthy of you or of him."

A stormy scene ensued. He would neither allow her to go, he said, nor would he give her back her promise to him. But she was firm, and said that she must go. His imprecations and his tears agitated her, but did not shake her resolution. She had a battle with her father also when she mentioned the subject, but she triumphed over him so far as to make him promise to accompany her. She sent the letter of introduction to Peter, and received a pithy reply from him. He advised her to come. With Peter and Maria she learned why Osgood wished her to visit them. She left them with a request that they should allow her to return whenever she should wish.

She found Barclay sullen and unhappy; but in spite of himself she convinced him that they were not intended for each other. It was a work to persuade him to the contrary; but at last they parted not as foes but friends.

When the engagement was annulled she took pains to ascertain from the owners of the *Stormy*

Petrel what time she was expected home, and before the date of her arrival she went on a visit to Peter and Maria.

There she studied the Marine List till she saw that the *Stormy Petrel* was in port. She said nothing of the fact to Peter, but as he read the Marine List too, he found it out for himself. He went away in his wagon a few mornings afterward, and when he returned Osgood was beside him.

"Thee is as white as a ghost, Lily," said Maria, after a few minutes.

Osgood put his arm round her, and they kissed each other. Peter pushed his hat on the back of his head, and kissed Maria, and said, "Give me my dinner."